

**STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED
PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL
YEAR 2015**

THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:43 a.m., in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. Patrick J. Leahy (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Leahy, Landrieu, Shaheen, Coons, Graham, Kirk, Coats, Blunt, and Boozman.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Good morning. Only because these guys have the job I always wanted to have, to be one of the photographers, I don't want to call them off too quickly.

Senator GRAHAM. It is never too late for a career change.

Senator LEAHY. I was recently speaking to a group of prosecutors in Vermont, and I said the best job I ever had was as a prosecutor. I don't know why I ever left it. Five hands went up in the room and said, "We'll trade." But I didn't.

I do appreciate the Secretary being here. He has a very busy and peripatetic schedule. The Secretary and I have been friends for decades, and I will say publicly what I told Secretary Kerry privately: I am extremely impressed and proud about the way he has embraced what is, especially these days, one of the most difficult jobs in the world. And it is hard to imagine anybody who walked into that job more qualified or prepared than you. I appreciate what you have done. I think the world appreciates what you have done.

Senator Mikulski is on the floor right now. She is an active member and strong supporter of the subcommittee, and thanks to her and Senator Shelby, we got our bills done last year. We are going to do everything possible to get them finished this year.

You and I have talked about how it makes it a little easier if you know exactly how much money you are going to have or don't have.

I also want to take a moment, I don't want to create problems for him at home, but I want to acknowledge Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. We need to move on.

Senator LEAHY. He travels around the world to see how our programs are working or not working. He and I have a close friendship, and we have tried to keep this subcommittee as nonpartisan as possible.

Senator GRAHAM. Absolutely.

Senator LEAHY. He has been a strong defender of the national interests that the budget protects, and we have tried to bring, each time, our bill to the floor with both of us voting on it.

Obviously, today we are focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and there will be questions about that, but there are also Iran, Syria, Egypt, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, North Korea, Venezuela, Sudan, weapons from Iran intercepted. It is an exhausting list.

And, Mr. Secretary, fortunately, you are able to work 40 hours a day, and juggle all of this. But it is almost, with it all going on, the American people have forgotten about Afghanistan, Iraq, two enormously costly military ventures that went terribly awry. We and the people of these countries will be paying for these mistakes for the care for wounded soldiers and their families for lifetimes to come.

Iraq alone will eventually cost the U.S. taxpayers \$2 trillion, the only war this country has ever entered where we did not have a tax to pay for it. We just put it on a credit card.

Around the world, we see civil society organizations and journalists are harassed and persecuted, many forced to flee their countries. Independence of the judiciary, fundamental to any democracy and fragile in many countries, is under threat. Violence and discrimination against women; shortages of water, energy, food; climate change; religious extremism; trafficking in arms, drugs, people, and wildlife; there is no issue that this Secretary or subcommittee can ignore.

The world looks more dangerous to many of us than it did during the Cold War. I don't think anyone could say that the administration's 2015 budget request for this subcommittee is excessive. In fact it is half a billion dollars, \$536 million, below the 2014 level.

I know our costs in Iraq have decreased, but there are several areas where I see potential problems, particularly the cut in funding for refugees and other humanitarian programs.

And I worry about the Western Hemisphere, including Colombia. If there is a peace agreement to try to end the conflict in Colombia—and I support what President Santos is doing at some political risk to himself; I traveled there and talked to him about this—we are going to want to help him secure that peace.

The many challenges that we face as a Nation, the costly mistakes since 9/11 that damaged our image and eroded our influence, I would like to think that when it comes to foreign policy, Democrats and Republicans can learn from history and learn to speak with one voice for the sake of the United States and this great country.

I would like to think that after fighting two long, inconclusive wars, the Secretary's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East and with Iran would have strong bipartisan support.

Right now, we don't need a Democratic foreign policy or a Republican foreign policy. We need an American foreign policy that is

rooted in our values and the example we set and which we can credibly ask others to follow.

PREPARED STATEMENT

So I yield to Senator Graham, and then, Mr. Secretary, the floor will be yours, unless the chairwoman comes and wishes to make a couple words.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

We are here to discuss President Obama's fiscal year 2015 budget for the Department of State and foreign operations.

Mr. Secretary, welcome. I want to say how impressed I am by the way you have embraced what can only be described as one of the most challenging jobs in the world. It is hard to imagine anyone more qualified for it, and we are very fortunate to have you there.

I also want to recognize our committee chairwoman, Senator Mikulski, who has long been an active member and strong supporter of this subcommittee. Thanks to her and Senator Shelby, we got our bills done last year and we are going to do everything possible to finish our work this year by October 1.

I also want to acknowledge Senator Graham. He travels around the world to see how programs are working—or not working—and he has been a strong defender of this budget and the important national interests it protects.

This subcommittee has produced bipartisan bills for as long as I have been here, and we intend to work the same way this year.

The world today is focused on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and we will have many questions about that. But there is also Iran, Syria, Egypt, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, North Korea, Venezuela, Sudan—it is an exhausting list. The Secretary is juggling them all.

Yet with everything else going on, it is almost as if Congress and the American people have forgotten about Afghanistan and Iraq, two enormously costly military adventures that went terribly awry. We and the people of those countries will be paying for those mistakes, and for the care of our wounded soldiers and their families, for lifetimes to come.

Around the world, civil society organizations and journalists are harassed and persecuted. Many are forced to flee their countries. The independence of the judiciary, fundamental to any democracy and fragile in many countries, is under threat.

Violence and discrimination against women; shortages of water, energy and food; climate change; religious extremism; the trafficking in arms, drugs, people, and wildlife—there is no issue that the Secretary or this subcommittee can ignore.

The world today looks more dangerous to many of us than it did during the Cold War, and I don't think anyone can credibly say that the administration's 2015 budget request for this subcommittee is excessive.

In fact, it is \$536 million below the 2014 level. While our costs in Iraq have decreased there are several areas where I see potential problems, particularly the cut in funding for refugees and other humanitarian programs.

I also worry about the Western Hemisphere, including Colombia. If there is a peace agreement to try to end that conflict—and I support what President Santos is doing, at some political risk to himself—we will want to help him secure the peace.

With the many challenges we face as a Nation and the costly mistakes since 9/11 that damaged our image and eroded our influence, I would like to think that at least when it comes to foreign policy, Democrats and Republicans can learn from history and find ways to speak with one voice.

I would like to think that after fighting two long, inconclusive wars the Secretary's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East and with Iran would have strong bipartisan support.

We do not need a Democratic foreign policy or a Republican foreign policy. We need an American foreign policy that is consistently rooted in our values and the example we set, and which we can credibly ask others to follow.

After Senator Graham makes his opening remarks Mr. Secretary the floor will be yours.

We will then have 7-minute rounds of questions in order of appearance.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really have enjoyed this committee. I want to compliment the members on our side. At a time of \$17 trillion national debt and a country being financially strapped, bipartisanship has reigned when it comes to the 1 percent of the budget that the country has available to us to affect outcomes throughout the world and help people in a way that will help us.

So Senator Coats is a former Ambassador to Germany. Mark Kirk is sort of legendary in his understanding and support for Israel and the Middle East.

And when I hear at home, "If we just got rid of foreign aid, our problems would be solved," I understand people feeling frustrated about the world and how dangerous it is, but this 1 percent I think has been well-managed, better managed over time.

Mr. Secretary, your folks are doing a great job in Africa. I am spending a lot of time in Africa, and you can see what President Bush started, and President Clinton. But the Bush initiatives have been carried on by the Obama administration. I want to have a hearing one day about the rate of return on investment, and the amount of money that we set aside to fight AIDS and malaria to develop health care opportunities on a continent that is under siege.

For people in Africa, our investment is not lost upon them. The Chinese are there for a different purpose. They see America and NGOs and the faith-based community in a very positive light. This is where, in many ways, radical Islam is moving in that direction. And we are going to cut them off.

We are going to cut them off not just militarily.

So, Mr. Chairman, we have a few differences, but when it comes to trying to keep this bipartisan and use the money wisely to help the American taxpayer—whether it is helping Jordan, which is being overrun by refugees—we work well with the State Department.

Mr. Secretary, I don't know how many miles a month you travel, but nobody can ever say that John Kerry has not been trying. You show up everywhere in the world where there is a conflict.

And I want to help where I can. We will have some differences, but on behalf of the American people, thank you for being involved.

And to all committee members, particularly on the Republican side, thank you for seeing the benefit that this account can offer our Nation.

Senator LEAHY. Please go ahead, Mr. Secretary.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF JOHN F. KERRY

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And Ranking Member Graham and all the members of the committee, Senators, good friends of mine, I am very appreciative of the opportunity to be able to testify here.

Even more so, I am really grateful for each of your service on this committee. I was around here long enough to know the difference between those committees that are easy to translate at home, and this is one of the hardest. This and the Foreign Rela-

tions Committee, it is tough, because people at home don't always see the connection.

And, Senator Graham, I want to pick up on your comments on that in a minute, if I can.

I am going to be very brief with my opening statement. I want to begin by, first of all, just telling you what a privilege it is for me to lead this extraordinary department, the Department of State, USAID, and the remarkable men and women who put themselves on the line every single day.

They are not wearing a uniform, but a whole bunch of them are taking risks in this dangerous world we live in. And they are doing it because of their love of country, because of their desire to try to change things for the better in the world, and take our values abroad and help to protect our interests. And they do it in amazing ways.

Senator Graham just mentioned the effort, trying. I believe we are getting a lot of things done, and I believe we are making a difference in many places. We can talk about that in the course of the morning, because it really is part of what translates into the return on investment that Senator Graham talked about.

And there are just so many different parts of the world where people don't see how America has made the difference, but we are making a difference in place after place. And that people say okay, so what? What does that mean? It makes America more secure.

It also opens up relationships that wind up growing economies, which means business for American companies, it means jobs at home, in every State, every district, in America. And we can show that. And we need to do more of showing it, and we intend to.

But right now, I would just say to all of you that the one thing that struck me more than anything else in the course of the last year, and I say this without any chauvinism or arrogance at all, but it is the degree to which our leadership does make a difference. It is the degree to which, if we are not engaged in one place or another, bad things often happen.

We are not the only force. I am not claiming that. We have great allies, great partners in these efforts. And some of them are equally as indispensable. But we do make that kind of difference.

Last week, I was standing in Kiev, looking at the lampposts that were riddled with bullet holes, barricades made up of tires and bedposts and different detritus from homes, and an amazing film of burnt ash and mud on the street. And these remarkable memorials that have grown up spontaneously to the people who were killed there, flowers piled on flowers, candles, photographs of those who died, it was incredibly moving.

And to talk to the people there and listen to them express their hopes, their desire to just be able to make choices like people in other countries, it was a privilege to listen to them. But I have to tell you, they are waiting for the world to back them up in these aspirations and to help them.

And what is true in Kiev is true in so many other places where people look to us to be able to try to provide opportunities. South Sudan, a nation which many of you helped give birth to, is struggling now. It needs our support to have a chance of surviving be-

yond its infamy, so it doesn't fall back into its history of being the longest war in Africa that has taken more than 2 million lives.

What we do matters in the Maghreb, where the State Department is coordinating with France in order to take down Al Qaeda there, make sure that French forces have the technology and weapons that they need.

What we do matters in Central Asia, where we are working with several nations to stop the trafficking of narcotics and keep more heroin off our streets, and cut off financing for terrorists and extremists, all of which makes Americans safer.

What we do matters in the Korean Peninsula, where we are working with our partners in the Republic of Korea, to make sure that we can meet any threat and to work toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. I was recently, a few weeks ago, in China, where we had very serious discussions about what the Chinese can do in addition to what they are already doing in order to have a greater impact on the denuclearization process. And we are working with Japan and the Republic of Korea in order to make sure they don't feel so threatened that they move toward nuclearization and self-help.

Thanks to the State Department's work, the South Koreans are now making the largest contribution they have ever made toward our joint security agreement.

What we do matters significantly where we support freedom of religion, and that is true from Bosnia to Indonesia, protecting universal rights of people to practice their faith freely and working to bring an end to the scourge of anti-Semitism.

And it isn't just what we do in the budget. Mr. Chairman, you know this better than anybody. It is an essential part of who we are as Americans.

I also know from my experience here in Congress, particularly under the budget constraints that you have referred to, that you shouldn't tell anybody that anything that costs billions of dollars is a bargain. We understand this is important money to American citizens.

But when you consider that the American people pay just 1 penny of every dollar in the tax dollar for the \$46.2 billion that is our budget, flatlined and down from where it was in 2013, I believe the American people are getting an extraordinary return on investment.

Now, some Members of Congress believe we ought to have larger budget cuts, but I have to say to you, when I measure what is happening in the world, the challenge and the Maghreb, in the Sahel, the Levant, and all of the Middle East, in South Asia, the challenge of huge numbers of young people under the age of 30 who are yearning for opportunity, yearning for their opportunity to touch what they see and know everybody in the world has today, because we are such an interconnected world, when I see the possibility of radical religious extremism grabbing them instead of the opportunity to have an education, the opportunity to get a good job, we better understand that threat to us. That is real.

And we will deal with it, one way or another, either now and get ahead of it, or later when it is a bigger problem.

For me, it is no coincidence that the places where we face some of the greatest national security challenges are also the places where the governments deny basic human rights and opportunities for their people, and where there is very little public discourse and accountability with any kind of free press or media or capacity for people to speak out.

So that is why supporting human rights and stronger civil societies and development assistance, investing in our partnerships with allies, these are the surest ways to prevent the kind of horrible human tragedies that we are in the business of addressing in today's very complicated world.

I also think that we have to remember that foreign policy, in 2014, is not all foreign. The fact is that we are, in the State Department, increasingly focused on economics, focused on building our strength here at home, on advancing American businesses and creating job opportunities. Every time I speak to the Department of State, I talk about foreign policy as economic policy. And every Foreign Service Officer today, and every civil service officer now, must also become an economic officer. And we have changed the training at the Foreign Service Institute in order to take all of our initial recruits and begin to structure ourselves differently than in the past.

Some people express skepticism about this. But let me just tell you, our Embassy in Zambia recently helped create jobs in New Jersey. The patient advocacy of our diplomats helped an American construction company land an \$85 million contract. They are building 144 bridges, and they have the potential to do far more. There may be a follow-on multi-hundred-million dollar contract.

Our consular staff in Calcutta, they helped bring Caterpillar together with a company in India to develop a \$500 billion power plant. When 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of our market, and when foreign governments are out there extremely aggressively chasing our RFPs, requests for proposals, contracts, jobs, opportunities, and they are backing their companies in a very significant way, we need to understand that we are living in a different world than we were in the Cold War, when America was the single powerhouse economy of the world and everybody else was recovering from World War II.

Then you feel you could make mistakes and still win. Now you can't. It is a different economic marketplace.

We believe this budget strengthens our partnerships where so many of our economic and security interests converge, in the East Asian Pacific region. And with this budget, we are bolstering our bedrock alliances with South Korea and Japan. And we are developing deeper partnership with Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and others, as they assume greater security roles.

Finally, I would just say to everybody, as we make these investments and project our values and our power in places that we need to in order to protect our interests, there is no way that we can eliminate all risk, especially in a world where our interests are not confined to prosperous capitals. We can and will do more to mitigate risks, and I am pleased to tell you that the budget that we have implements all of the recommendations of our Benghazi report and makes additional investments above and beyond those.

PREPARED STATEMENT

So it is fair to say we are doing the best we can in a difficult budget environment where we have caps and we had a budget agreement. I firmly believe that, with your help, and I thank you for it, this committee has done an extraordinary job of helping us to be able to strike a balance between the need to sustain long-term investments in American leadership and the political imperative to tighten our belts.

So, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to having a discussion on these priorities.

[The statement follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN F. KERRY

I want to thank Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Graham for their leadership, as well as each member of the subcommittee for their commitment to America's leadership in the world.

Of course, I was serving here with you for quite a while—29 years plus. Believe me, I know that choosing to be on this committee doesn't win you many votes back home. The work you do here doesn't drive fundraising. But it matters—it really matters—and this has never been more clear to me than over the past year—when I've seen firsthand and over and over again, just how much the world looks to the United States on issue after issue.

Bringing people together and finding answers to tough challenges—that's what the United States does. If we "get caught trying," then we're living up to what the world expects from us and what we expect from ourselves.

I think that's especially true in Ukraine. From the very beginning we have made our goal clear: to help the people of Ukraine achieve what brought thousands upon thousands into the Maidan in the first place. Our interest is in protecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and with European partners and others, we absolutely have a responsibility to be engaged.

Certainly we have to be clear-eyed about the challenges. But from the beginning, we've made it known that we are willing to sit down to try and deescalate this situation. That is why President Obama asked me to leave this evening for London and meet with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov tomorrow.

I will make clear again, as we have throughout, that while we respect that Russia has interests in Ukraine, particularly in Crimea, that in no way—no way—justifies the military intervention the world has witnessed. There are many other legitimate ways to address Russia's concerns.

In my discussions with Minister Lavrov I'll also make it clear that Russia has reasons to make the right choice. The costs for Russia's violations of international law—the cost of making Russia more isolated—not just from the United States, but from the international community—is a cost that Russia should not want to bear, and doesn't have to bear if they make a better choice.

Congress' support is going to be absolutely vital. Whether its loan guarantees to help support a free Ukraine, an assistance stream, or support for additional sanctions if that's what we need, you give us the tools to accomplish our goals.

So it couldn't be any clearer, what we do here really matters. When I think about that I remember last week in Kiev—standing in the spot where Ukraine's former president had snipers pick off peaceful protesters one by one. It was very moving to speak with some of the Ukrainian people and hear how much they look to us.

The same is true far from Kiev or what's in the headlines. What we do matters to South Sudan, a nation some of you helped give birth to—a nation that's now struggling and needs our support to have a chance of surviving beyond infancy.

What we do matters in the Maghreb, where the State Department is coordinating with France to take down al-Qaeda, making sure French forces have the technology and weapons they need.

What we do matters in Central Asia, where we're working with several nations to stop the trafficking of narcotics, to keep more heroin off our streets and cut off financing for terrorists and extremists.

What we do matters on the Korean Peninsula, where we are working with our partners from the Republic of Korea to make sure we can meet any threat and for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Thanks to the State Department's work, the South Koreans are now making the largest financial contribution to these efforts in the history of our joint security agreement.

What we do matters everywhere we support religious freedom, from Bosnia to Indonesia. Protecting the universal rights of people to practice their faith freely and working to bring an end to the scourge of anti-Semitism—this isn't just what we do in this budget; this is an essential part of who we are as Americans.

Now, I spent enough time in Congress to know that you shouldn't call anything that costs billions of dollars a bargain. But when you consider that the American people pay just one penny of every tax dollar for the \$46.2 billion in investments in this request, I believe the American people are getting an extraordinary return on their investment.

Our base request is \$40.3 billion—and that's in line with what was appropriated to the Department and USAID last year. We're making a constant effort to be more effective and agile, and as you well know, we're doing that under some tight constraints.

The additional part of our request for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), totals \$5.9 billion. OCO provides the State Department and USAID the ability to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. It gives us flexibility to meet some unanticipated peacekeeping needs. OCO funds our programs in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, where we continue to right-size our commitments.

I know it might be easy for some members of Congress to support larger cuts in this budget. What's impossible to calculate is the far greater price our country would pay for inaction. What's impossible to calculate are the dangers in a world without American leadership and the vacuum that would create for extremists and ideologues to exploit.

For me it's no coincidence that the places where we face some of the greatest national security challenges are also places where governments deny basic human rights and opportunities for their people. That's why supporting human rights and stronger civil societies, development assistance, investing in our partnerships with our allies: these are the surest ways to prevent the kind of horrible human tragedy we see Syria today.

I know some of you have looked these refugees in the eyes and seen their numbers, as I have. There is simply no way the richest and most powerful nation in the world can simply look away. For both the Syrian people and for Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, trying to keep their societies running and keep extremists at bay as they cope with a refugee crisis, our support could not be more urgent. It is both a moral and security imperative.

With our assistance to the Philippines, recovering from one of the worst natural disasters in its history, we are also leading the way. Through a \$56 million contribution from State and USAID, we are working with our partners so that hundreds of thousands of people can put their lives back together. We're helping one of our oldest allies in the Pacific get back on its path to prosperity.

Within our core budget request is also a \$1.35 billion contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The goal that President Obama has set today for an AIDS free generation would have been absolutely unthinkable even 10 years ago but today that goal is within reach. Because of PEPFAR's incredible success, we are now working to transition the leadership of these life-saving programs to local hands with Rwanda, Namibia, and South Africa some of the first to take the reins.

Because of our leadership, children waking up today in Sub-Saharan Africa face a far different future than they did a decade ago. Our commitment clearly matters. And just as our partners in Asia and Europe made a transition from being recipients of American aid to becoming donors, that kind of transformation is now possible in Africa.

And to make sure that emerging markets around the world make the most of their opportunities, we need reforms to the International Monetary Fund. Just think about this: Brazil, Chile, Columbia, India, Korea, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand—all of these nations once borrowed from the IMF. Now they are creditors with some of the most dynamic economies in the world.

Ukraine's struggle for independence, particularly its financial independence, depends on Congress ratifying reforms that will help Ukraine borrow through the IMF's Rapid Financing Instrument. Our \$1 billion loan guarantee is needed urgently but it's only through the IMF—a reformed IMF—that Ukraine will receive the additional help it needs to stand on its own two feet.

Our work with the IMF is vital to global economic stability. But remaining absolutely focused on creating opportunity here at home is essential. That means we have to be strong advocates for America's commercial interests across the globe. And that's why I've charged each of Foreign Service Officers with an economic mission: to create opportunities for Americans and work with our businesses to gain a bigger foothold abroad.

I know there's some skepticism about this kind of economic diplomacy. But it's hard to argue with some of the results. Look at how our Embassy in Zambia helped create jobs in New Jersey. The patient advocacy of our diplomats helped an American construction company land an \$85 million contract. They're building 144 bridges and have the potential to do far more.

Look at the work of our consular staff in Kolkata. They helped bring Caterpillar together with a company in India to develop a \$500 million power plant.

Look at what Embassy Wellington and Embassy Apia in Samoa are doing. Our diplomats helped a company right here on the East Coast land a \$350 million contract to lay fiber optics across the Pacific.

When 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of our market and when foreign governments are out there, aggressively backing their own businesses, this is the kind of advocacy American workers need to compete.

Telling our story where it matters most is vital to both the success of our businesses and the appeal of our values. With this budget's investments in stronger people to people ties, educational exchange and countering violent extremism, we are shaping the debate. We are keeping traditional programs strong, like those for International Visitor Leadership and English language programs. At the same time we are revitalizing the way we engage through quick-impact investments to shape emerging leaders in civil society.

We call some of these investments quick impact but you and I both know their lasting benefits. I can't tell you how many times foreign leaders share their experience of studying in the United States and the permanent and positive impression it made. And all of you who have colleges and universities in your districts also see the financial impact from the \$22 billion each year that international students bring to the U.S. economy.

This budget also strengthens our partnerships where so many of our economic and security interests converge, in the East Asia and Pacific region. With this budget we are bolstering our bedrock alliances with South Korea and Japan. We're developing deeper partnerships with Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and others, as they assume greater security roles.

As we make these investments around the world, we can never eliminate every risk—especially in a world where our vital interests are not confined to secure, prosperous capitals. But we can and will do more to mitigate risks and keep our people safe. This budget implements the recommendations of the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB) and makes additional investments that go above and beyond.

My friends, I think it's fair to say that we are doing the best we can in a difficult budget environment. I firmly believe that this budget strikes a balance between the need to sustain long-term investments in American leadership and the political imperative to tighten our belts. I believe this budget is a blueprint for providing the minimum our people need to carry out their mission: to enhance national security, to promote global stability and prosperity, and to help the American people seize the opportunities in a changing world. Thank you.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you for a very complete review.

U.S. SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

Fortunately, I come from a State that believes in diplomacy and reaching out. We export more per capita, I believe, than any other State, even though we are a small State. We share a border with a great and wonderful friend, Canada. We share another border with your own State of Massachusetts. And I will stop at that point.

I am looking, right now, we have two different pieces of legislation on Ukraine, one from the House, the other from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to authorize assistance for Ukraine. I think all of us hope we can get agreement on a bill that the President can sign, so we just don't have speeches on the floors of both bodies, but no piece of legislation at the end.

One of the things that seems to be missing from the press releases and op-eds, although I enjoy reading them, is that it is the Appropriations Committee, and actually this subcommittee, in par-

ticular, that will actually decide what assistance and how much to provide.

And, of course, that will depend on what evolves in Ukraine over the coming months. None of us can predict that.

I am sure that others have questions about Ukraine, but let me start with this. Many foreign policy experts, including your predecessors Henry Kissinger and Condoleezza Rice, and former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, have offered opinions about how to respond to Russia's aggression in Crimea. Each of them recounts history, but then they each draw different conclusions and lessons from that history, and they advocate different responses, an indication that there is no unified view out there.

How do you respond to former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, who says he does not believe that Russia will give up Crimea? Is there another way to resolve this, that preserves Crimea as part of Ukraine, but also recognizes Russia's interest there?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, the truth is we don't know the answer to that question yet. We can speculate.

There are strong indications that could lead you to draw the conclusion Bob Gates did, and there are other thoughts out there that suggest that something short of the full annexation might also be achievable.

Frankly, we won't know the answer to that until I meet with Foreign Minister Lavrov tomorrow in London. I talked to him briefly today. They are meeting in Russia in Sochi today with President Putin, their security team.

My hope is that they will come aware of the fact that the international community is really strong and united on this issue.

Senator LEAHY. Let me ask you about that. Suppose the people of Crimea vote to leave Ukraine. The Russian parliament, which will do whatever President Putin tells it to, votes to annex Crimea, how is the U.S. and Europe, our allies, how do we respond at that point?

Secretary KERRY. Well, I think the response will come well before that, Mr. Chairman. There will be a response of some kind to the referendum itself. In addition, if there is no sign of any capacity to be able to move forward and resolve this issue, there will be a very serious series of steps on Monday in Europe and here with respect to the options that are available to us.

Now our choice is not to be put in the position of having to do that.

Senator LEAHY. I understand.

Secretary KERRY. Our choice is to have a respect for the sovereignty and independence and integrity of the country of Ukraine. Our hope is to have Russia join in respecting international law.

There is no justification, no legality to this referendum that is taking place. It violates international law. It violates the U.N. charter. It violates the Constitution of Ukraine.

And I don't think anybody can believe that a hastily put together, rushed referendum taking place under the imprint of 20,000-plus troops and all that has happened without debate, without opportunity, is a genuine referendum. But even if it were, I will just say one thing, I don't think there is much doubt, given the circumstances, what the vote is going to be. Nobody doubts that.

So this is not a question mark. The question mark is, is Russia prepared to find a way to negotiate with Ukraine, with the contact group, with other countries involved, in order to be able to resolve this in a way that respects their legitimate interests, and they have legitimate interests, but respects them in a way that doesn't violate international law and is not at the butt of a rifle and a massive military imprint.

Senator LEAHY. Well, the new Government of Ukraine has made it very clear that they want closer ties with Europe. The Russians have basically invaded Crimea, notwithstanding the strange comments of President Putin that these are private people who bought uniforms at a store, which gave great fodder to the late-night comics. But are there other former Soviet republics who express interest in closer ties with Europe? And we could name several of them. Are they in similar danger of invasion by the Russian army?

Secretary KERRY. They fear the ultimate possibility. They are not in danger of that as of today.

But yes, I was talking this morning with the foreign ministers from the region, and they are all concerned about this rattling.

But again, I think that the hope, Mr. Chairman, is that reason will prevail, but there is no guarantee of that whatsoever. The European Community is strongly united. They will meet on Monday.

The President of the United States has made it clear he is prepared to move. He has already designated, without designating individuals, he has already issued an executive order creating the construct for personal sanctions, and we have a very clear list of those who would be included in the event that we can't move this process forward.

Senator LEAHY. Well, to add to this, because of the tension it creates with Russia, the very serious differences—I am glad you are meeting with the foreign minister. I wish you luck there. But having met with him at different times on other matters, I know that can be a difficult thing.

But we are working with Russia, and you helped engineer this, and I applaud you for it, for the removal of chemical weapons from Syria. We worked with him, hoping we could bring this horrible, horrible tragedy to an end in Syria with the continuing humanitarian disaster of refugees, something that is destroying generations to come.

We have our negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program. Russia is involved in that.

Is it going to affect the removal of chemical weapons? The possibility of a diplomatic solution in Syria? And thirdly, the negotiations with Iran over its nuclear?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we hope not, Mr. Chairman, but obviously it has the potential to. It has the capacity to.

I have talked about that with Foreign Minister Lavrov. He is aware, we are aware, of that being one of the ingredients in this, which we hope would push people toward a more reasonable path. But there is no way to predict it.

And the key will be to figure out whether or not President Putin is serious about looking for a way under international law to move this process forward.

Can I just mention one thing quickly?

Senator LEAHY. Sure.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF)

Secretary KERRY. You mentioned the IMF at the very beginning. I want to thank the committee, I want to thank the Senate, for being on track to do what is important here.

We must have IMF reform. We must have a quota. And it would be a terrible message to Ukraine for everybody to be standing up talking appropriately about what is at stake, but then not to be able to follow through. The IMF is critical; we need that help.

Senator LEAHY. Senator Graham and I joined together to get this through the Senate, and we got it through the Senate with a bipartisan majority. I met with Ms. Lagarde and some House Members in Davos. She expressed enormous concerns that the House dropped it. I tried to make it very clear, we did it here in the Senate, and we are prepared to do it. And I wish they had, because it created enormous problems for the United States, as you know. You were having discussions with them, as the Secretary of the Treasury and others had.

It was a huge, huge blow to the United States, the fact that the other body did not go along with us on this.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So many places to talk about, such little time. I mean, we could have a second round of questions. But let us get on with the IMF.

Do you agree, Mr. Secretary, that the IMF, from an American point of view, is a tool in the toolbox that has shown to be a wise investment?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. In fact, a huge number of countries that were IMF recipients are now donors in one way or another to economic initiatives around the world.

Senator GRAHAM. And this is the one area where it is not just our money. You have the international community coming together and the loans are given to reinforce the good guys, deter the bad guys, and bring about reform to make countries like Ukraine more stable. Is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. To my colleagues: I can understand being war weary. It is a natural response to being at war with radical Islam and other entities for a long time. But I can't understand taking everything off the table.

If never use military force—I am certain we want to do that as a last resort. If we don't have foreign assistance. If we don't want to be involved in the IMF. What do we do? We just hope things get better?

So I am all in, in trying to pursue what the Senate Foreign Relations—

Secretary KERRY. Can I just say very quickly, Senator, our leadership on this is now in doubt.

When people say the United States is retreating, we are inadvertently hurting ourselves by sending a message that we are not prepared to lead and step up and complete the task.

We are the only country that hasn't ratified this. And the implications of that are just enormous in terms of American leadership.

The IMF is the tool that helps to bring countries into alignment on their transparency, their accountability, their reforms, their market economy, all of the things that are in our interests.

So I could not underscore more, Senator Graham, the importance of what you are saying and the importance of us following through on this.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I have been critical, I think sometimes forcefully, and appropriately so, about the administration's foreign policy. But the Congress needs to do some self-evaluation of where we are as a body, what is our role in all of this.

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Let's talk about Syria very quickly. Do you think Assad is winning right now, on the battlefield?

Secretary KERRY. I don't think anybody is winning, but he is not losing.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Secretary KERRY. And the way I would phrase it is he is doing better than he was doing. He has gotten somewhat of an upper hand, but this thing runs like a roller coaster. It is not going to be solved militarily.

Senator GRAHAM. The only trajectory we are sure of is that refugees are coming into Jordan and Lebanon at a pace that is unsustainable.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely true.

Senator GRAHAM. Would you reinforce to the American people, if this war goes on another year, and we are in this situation where the battlefield is basically as it is today, that Lebanon and Jordan are going to be in great peril?

Secretary KERRY. Indeed, Senator. I appreciate the opportunity to say a word about it.

Jordan is a critical ally to the United States. Jordan has been a partner with Israel, a partner with the United States, a significant partner in the region, for peace and for stability.

And Jordan currently has over 900,000, close to 1 million-plus refugees. And what is happening is, those refugees go out into Jordanian society, and they look for jobs. They get apartments. But they get 10 people in one apartment paying a much higher rent, and it squeezes out Jordanians.

In jobs, they are willing to work for less. They are more desperate. They, therefore, affect the marketplace. They affect the entire political fabric of the country, and it begins to destabilize.

Likewise, in Lebanon, in Lebanon, they don't have formal camps. You have almost 900,000 Syrian refugees scattered throughout Lebanon. I saw a map of it the other day from where it has gone in the last 3 years, with these few red dots up and down the coastline. Now the entire coast is red, from north to south, filled with refugees.

The destabilization of that is very significant. So we have a national security interest in that.

Also, the devastation on families, children, children not in school, the future problems for us in terms of potential terrorism, spread of terrorism, are very, very real. It is in our national security interests to try to change that.

Senator GRAHAM. I think that is well said, but having said that, the President's budget cuts aid to Jordan by \$300 million. So I would like to try to restore that. Would you help me?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, we have provided significant add-ons of aid to Jordan over the course of the last year, well over what was originally appropriated. And there is nobody we support more overall.

But in view of some of the other things we are doing, this is a trade-off. We have been forced into a zero-sum game.

Senator GRAHAM. I got you.

Secretary KERRY. I will help as much as I can, but in the end, you guys have the power on this one.

Senator GRAHAM. The statement you made about Jordan I think is very accurate.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE

On Ukraine, I don't know what Putin is going to do. I am not so sure he knows what he is going to do. He is probably making this up as it goes, and I think we have sent a lot of wrong signals to him and others.

But let's look down the road and start talking about worst-case scenarios.

The worst-case scenario for me is that he annexes the Crimea, that the joke of the Duma ratifies this illegal referendum, and somehow they say that they are answering the call of the Crimean citizenry, which is a complete joke coming out of Hitler's playbook. And Secretary Clinton was right about that.

What happens if they go east? What if they create friction in the eastern part of Ukraine, bring in paid-for thugs to create demonstrations, wanting the eastern part of Ukraine to be part of Russia. And the Ukrainians say enough already, we have a small army, but we will fight and we will die if necessary to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. And the Ukrainian Government asks NATO and us, not for boots on the ground, but for military hardware to help them fight the Russians, ask for weapons like other people have asked us in the past.

What do you recommend we do, if that happens?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, we have contingencies. We are talking through various options that may or may not be available.

Our hope is, however, not to create hysteria or excessive concern about that at this point in time. Our hope is to be able to avoid that. But there is no telling that we can.

Senator GRAHAM. See, and I——

Secretary KERRY. Let me just finish one thought?

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Secretary KERRY. We are watching, every day, very, very carefully, the movement of troops. Under the basing act, the basing agreement, which permits Russians to have their forces in Crimea, they are permitted to have up to about 25,000 troops under that.

There is a requirement that they not interfere in the sovereignty of Ukraine from that base. And, obviously, and what they have done in the last days, they have done that, so they are in violation of the base agreement.

We guesstimate, estimate, all of our input, somewhere in the vicinity of 20,000 troops there now, so they are not above the limit, to the best of our judgment. But we also make the judgment at this point that they don't have the assets in the places necessary to be able to, say, march in and take over all of Ukraine. But that could change very quickly, and we recognize that.

The options, according to the Ukrainians themselves, are there probably would not be an all-out confrontation, initially, but you would have a longtime insurgency/counter effort that they will fight. And these are people who know how to fight, and they are committed to that one way or another.

So there are a lot of different options, but I think before we get there, we have a number of options to make it clear to President Putin the level of isolation that he might be asking for, and the degree to which many of the people around him, if not he, himself, could be affected by that choice in very real ways before you get to any kind of troop and other kinds of evaluations.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, I hope we never get there, too.

I don't want to take any more time. I would like to have another conversation with you.

But just one final point, I really do believe that Russia is all in for Assad because he believes it is in their interest to keep Assad afloat, and they are supplying him with all the arms he needs, and it seems to be working.

I just want the Ukrainian people to know that when we say we stand by you, that has some context.

And I want the Russians to understand that there will be a point, and I don't know when that point is reached, that you really will pay a price. I don't think they believe that. But if you start marching eastward, and you start killing Ukrainians who are just asking to make their own determinations in life, apart from Russian tanks and thuggery, that that may be a point that you don't want to go across because the response may be greater than you think.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, just 30 seconds, I would just say to you that I have been impressed by how united our European allies are on this. And we had a conference call this morning with foreign ministers on the phone, all the contact group, and to a person they are very, very committed, to a country, to make sure that there is accountability.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you very much.

Thank you for what you said on Jordan. There is strong bipartisan support to help Jordan. Most of us have met with the king, many of us have traveled there. Frankly, I don't know how a small country like that handles the enormous burden put on it, but I applaud them for handling it. But I don't know how they deal with this enormous burden of all the refugees.

Senator Landrieu.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for testifying before us, and most importantly, thank you for your service. As a military leader, a Senator, and now as a Secretary, who I think is making a remarkable difference in the world with multiple challenges.

KEYSTONE PIPELINE

I have four questions this morning. The first is on energy, and it relates to the Keystone pipeline and the decision that you are going to make, and the administration is going to make, about a critical, in my view, piece of infrastructure that will transport safely the cleanest barrel of oil produced in North America, contrary to popular belief.

Canada is our closest and our strongest trading partner. You are aware that their environmental standards are in fact higher than ours, and among the highest in the world.

And this resource of 30 billion barrels of oil represents, I understand, the largest single free-enterprise resource in the world.

So from my perspective, and particularly the people that I represent, it is hard for us to even understand why there is a question as to whether this infrastructure is in the national interest.

Could you comment about the economic benefits, the aspect of the strengthening of a relationship that is really vital to our long-term interests, and what your considerations are in addition to those two?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, I understand it is on a lot of people's minds. I mean, a lot of people. The department has received and evaluated more than 1.9 million public comments. And the final supplemental EIS on this is 11 volumes, more than 7,000 pages. My job now is to review it and make a determination.

But I also have to get feedback from eight different agencies. I am continuing to get additional information. And if I have any legitimate questions, then I need to have those answered.

So I am not at liberty to go into my thinking, at this point. It is just not appropriate, except to say to you that I am approaching this tabula rasa. I am going to look at all the arguments, both sides, all sides, whatever, evaluate them, and make the best judgment I can about what is in the national interest.

And I will forward that to the President of the United States, who has ultimate authority to make this decision.

Senator LANDRIEU. Thank you. And I am going to stay focused not only in my role as a Senator, but as chair of the Energy Committee on really pressing the country to understand the importance of becoming an energy powerhouse with cleaner energy sources requires the infrastructure, whether it is our transmission lines, our pipelines, our roads, our ports, our import-export.

And it is important not only to our economy, but I do think it has a real bearing on our position in the world as a superpower. And that is what this budget reflects, basically our defense budget and our State Department budget sets us up to be a superpower. And it is very relevant.

AID TO ORPHANS

The next two questions are on children. PEPFAR was put into place, as you know, in 2003. It has been touted as one of the most successful programs internationally in the world. I believe that it has enjoyed broad bipartisan support.

I think you were helpful when PEPFAR was created, as I remember, to set aside a very small portion of the \$7 billion annually

for orphans and vulnerable children—\$350 million, that is all—to address the fact that AIDS creates orphans. It creates a lot of sick people, and it results in death. But it also results in orphans, kids that are double orphan, both parents dying, or a single orphan, one parent dying but abandoned by the surviving parent.

When we reauthorized PEPFAR this last year, out of respect for Senators Menendez and Corker, who did not want any serious amendments, I did not offer an amendment to make sure that \$350 million was going more directly to help children reconnect to families.

Would you commit to me today, and to others, that you and your team will work to try to meet the original objectives of that \$350 million to reconnect children that are orphaned by AIDS to families?

Secretary KERRY. We would like to do that very, very much. Again, this is a reflection of just the tension in the overall budget.

But we do believe that the way we have been able to do this, Senator Landrieu, will in fact meet our available funding requirements with respect to this challenge.

We have \$1.35 billion in here. This honors the President's commitment to do \$1 from us for every \$2 contributed by other donors to the fund, up to a possible \$5 billion. And this more than fully funds what we are seeing will be available from the pledges of other countries.

Senator LANDRIEU. But the problem is, when PEPFAR was created, there were approximately 15 million orphans in the world. There are now 17 million. So the rate of infection is going down, but the rate of orphans is going up.

This is the only money, \$350 million.

My second question, on children, is the CHIFF bill, Children in Families First. There are five members of this subcommittee who are cosponsors—Senator Kirk, Senator Blunt, myself, Senator Shaheen, and Senator Coons. We are very, very serious about helping you to organize and put resources in your department that can focus on the fundamental fact that children belong in families, children should be in families.

It seems to be a missing component of our foreign policy. There are lots of components of foreign policy. We are having a hard time finding anywhere where it says children belong in families.

So we are going to continue to work with you—I know my time is up—on this bill as it moves through Senator Menendez's committee.

But I do want to put into the record one of the things that is propelling us, Mr. Chairman, is that there have been no reported international adoptions from any country that has become a Hague partner with the United States since 2008.

A letter has been sent to you. It has not been answered. Please answer it and let's continue to work together to see what we can do to move this issue forward.

And I thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Well, if I could just comment quickly, first of all, Senator Landrieu, you know from our meeting and you know from our relationship—you are the champion on this whole issue of children and adoption, and you have done amazing work at it.

I was struck, in the meeting that we had in the Senate, that you and Senator Blunt and Senator Angus King and myself are all beneficiaries of knowing about adoption. I have a niece who comes from China and has just been enormously important to our family, so I understand this.

I also committed to you that the State Department needs to do more. It needs to do better. There is no question about it. But I don't want to be the Secretary of State who takes the State Department out of the business of helping to make this happen. I want to be the Secretary who helps get this to be more effective within the department and more effective overall.

In that light, we should continue to work. I understand that talks have come to a little bit of a standstill on this question of jurisdiction and where it goes.

I am convinced, as I said to you, that we can meet your needs. But I also know this: Embassies are holistic and they deal with all of the policies within a country. And sometimes there are many policies that affect adoption for children, which requires the ambassador and the whole of an Embassy to impact.

I just do not believe we will advance this cause by putting it wholly and totally into DHS or somewhere else, where they are geared to handle the visa and that component of the analysis, but not all of the other parts that will make this policy as effective as it can be.

That is what I want to do with you. So I can hope we can work at that.

Senator LANDRIEU. We will continue to work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator LEAHY. I am not sure when votes may start on the floor, so we are going to try to keep close to time. And here is the list, we will go to Senator Coats, then Senator Shaheen, Senator Kirk, Senator Coons, Senator Boozman.

So, Senator Coats.

Senator COATS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will try to be brief.

Secretary Kerry, I assume you don't get frequent flyer miles, but if you did, you would be set for life.

RUSSIAN SANCTIONS

A question, Senator Durbin and I yesterday coauthored a Senate resolution relative to some sanctions, really not sanctions so much as providing some isolation. There are 15 separate items on there, and it passed the Senate 100-to-nothing.

We know the big one is coming, and you are negotiating all that, the economic sanctions and so forth are part of that. But just two of those areas that I will list in the 15, and I wonder if these are being included in what you are negotiating right now.

One is the participation in the G8, Russia's participation in that. I don't think they were invited in there, would have been invited in there, had we known that they were going to breach their responsibility in terms of invading a neighbor.

And secondly is the relationship between NATO and the Russian council.

Is there anything in your considerations, the program you are putting together, incorporating those two issues?

Secretary KERRY. Actually, it doesn't require a bill to do those, to be honest with you, Senator. And both of those have been talked about publicly by me, by the President. The President has already made it clear, I mean the G7 countries have made it clear that they are not thinking about going to Sochi under these circumstances and having a G8 meeting. That is step one.

Whether there would be further steps with respect to changing the structure and becoming a G7 again or not, that is up for grabs.

And the NATO Russia Council has been put on hold already, so there are a lot of downstream impacts already to the bilateral relationship and to the multilateral relationship.

Senator COATS. Good. Thank you.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

And let me ask you a question about Iran, while we are here.

Back in 2007, Iran had about 700 centrifuges that were spinning uranium. Virtually the entire community of nations indicated that that is too dangerous of a situation to tolerate. The U.N. Security Council then began passing a series of resolutions, demanding that this effort stop completely.

The United States, led in many ways by the Senate—you were a member there at the time—went through the careful and, I think, painstaking process of both diplomacy and tough sanctions, all aimed at explicitly enforcing the Iranian regime to end enrichment activities. And that struggle has gone on.

Now it appears to me that in the P5-plus-1 negotiations, that goal has been set aside. You have a better understanding of where we are right now than I do, but I have not seen any reference, either by you or anyone else, to these Security Council resolutions and the demand that enrichment activities be completely and immediately suspended.

Has that goal been abandoned? I guess my question is, does the administration still seek to force the Iranians to give up enrichment, or have we basically decided that that is not going to be part of our negotiations for an ongoing comprehensive agreement?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, what date did you attach to the 700 centrifuges? 1990?

Senator COATS. 2007.

Secretary KERRY. 2000-what?

Senator COATS. 2007.

Secretary KERRY. Yes, well, 2001, there were, I forget, it is in the several hundred, I think, 2002. Now there are about 19,000. That is where we have traveled in this "don't talk, don't sit down" journey.

Senator COATS. Which is why sanctions probably played an instrumental role in that effort.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. And what has brought us to the table to begin this negotiation are a combination of sanctions, but also I think fairness requires that we say that, with the election of President Rouhani, there was an effort, a conscious declaration by Iran, that they were going to reach out and attempt to see if they could get out from under this cloud.

So we are now testing that proposition. And in the first step, it is not an interim agreement, it is a first step toward a final comprehensive agreement, we are ratcheting them back from where they are. The 20 percent uranium that is enriched today has to go down to zero over the course of these next 6 months, now 4 months left. And they are reducing it.

The 3.5 percent stockpile that they have cannot grow, so they are basically frozen there.

On the Iraq plutonium reactor, they are under the requirement not to put in any component that could contribute to the commissioning of that reactor—no fuel—and they have to give us the plans for it, which they have done.

In addition, we have inspectors within Fordow. We didn't have any before the agreement. We have inspectors at Natanz. We didn't have them before the agreement. And we have inspectors on a less frequent basis in the Iraq production facility.

We also have the right to inspect their storage facilities for centrifuges. We are following and tracking their milling and mining of uranium, so that we are tracking from cradle to grave. And we have begun the process of putting in place very intrusive verification and so forth.

Now, at this point in time, the U.N. resolutions are active. And there is a goal of trying to implement that. I can't tell you today whether or not that is achievable.

And so the goal hasn't changed, but we are in a negotiation where the real goal is to guarantee that they cannot get a nuclear weapon and that whatever program they might have peacefully going forward is one where we have absolutely failsafe guarantees to the best of our ability to know it through the negotiating process and what we achieve that we will know what they are doing and know it well ahead of any potential of their breaking out.

As we began this negotiation, the breakout time by most judgments, meaning the time to get sufficient uranium enriched for one nuclear weapon, was about 2 months. It is longer now, because of the first step that we have taken.

And I can guarantee you that in order to have a final agreement that will be comprehensive enough to meet our standards, the standards of our gulf friends, of Israel, of others, it is going to have to grow significantly beyond where it is today.

So we believe we are heading in the right direction. I can't tell you where it is going to finally land. We don't know. There are some very tough decisions the Iranians are going to have to make—very tough—in order to meet the international community's standard for certainty as to the peacefulness of this program.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you.

Senator COATS. Mr. Chairman, I will not ask another question, if I could just respond there.

Despite the efforts that we are making, the Iranians have declared publicly a negotiation victory over the fact that cessation of enrichment, which has been in a series of U.N.-supported resolutions, Security Council-supported resolutions, that has been the determination and statements of four presidents, two Democrats and two Republicans, that that goal has been abandoned, and Iran has achieved in moving the ball toward a different kind of goal, which

we hope will be successful. But the fact of the matter is that no longer is the goal.

Keeping Iran from producing a nuclear weapon is far different than having the capability of doing that. It sounds a lot to me like what we went through with North——

Secretary KERRY. Senator, if I could just say to you, remember the U.N. resolution wasn't that they couldn't have any enrichment at some point in time. It is what they had to suspend. And the reason for the suspension requirement was because we didn't know what was happening at Fordow. There weren't any restraints. There was no inspection. There was no certainty as to where they were going.

So it is an open question, but nothing has been decided. The initial agreement, the JPOA, as it is referred to, specifically states nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. And I can guarantee you there has been no giveaway on that final issue at that this point in time.

But we are talking about how do you get sufficient verification, intrusive inspection, capacity to know what is happening, so that no matter what is going on, we are protected and our friends in the region are protected.

Senator LEAHY. I think the most important thing is we continue the negotiations, and I do not think the Congress, whether responding to various lobbies or not, is a place to conduct a negotiation. Let's let the negotiators try to work it out.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for your tireless efforts to address so many of the crises we are facing in the world today. You make us very proud here.

First, I don't have any questions on Ukraine, because there have been a number of those. But I do want to point out that I hope that the work of the Foreign Relations Committee yesterday to come to a bipartisan agreement on a bill to address Ukraine that includes both sanctions on Russia and support for the new government in Ukraine will be helpful as we are trying to address the crisis there.

I think it is very important that we do work together here in Congress to support your efforts. And I think that is exactly what the committee did.

SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS

I want to start with Syria. I have two questions about Syria. As you point out in your testimony, it is one of the greatest tragedies we are facing in the world today. It is just horrific what has happened to the people of Syria, the destruction of their country. And part of that has been the chemical weapons that Assad has had. And there was an agreement that you helped broker to have Assad commit to eliminate their chemical weapons stockpile.

He has now missed several deadlines for commitments that he had made. It seems like it is not realistic to think that they are going to meet their end of April deadline. Can you say what more we can do to pressure Assad to make sure that they reduce these chemical weapons? And then can you also address humanitarian efforts there, and what more we can do to support and to get the

Russians to engage with Assad to make sure that humanitarian efforts get to the people who need them?

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you very much, Senator Shaheen. Thank you for your generous comments at the beginning.

And I do thank you, all of you. Those of you who serve on the Foreign Relations Committee, I thank the Foreign Relations Committee for its initiative, which is helpful.

Syria is deeply troubling for all of the reasons that everybody on the committee understands. And it is also troubling for other reasons, not that you don't understand them, but they are not written about publicly that much.

The opposition has been sidetracked, to some degree, focusing on extremists. So you have had a fight between the Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, as it is called, and some of the other groups. And that has detracted from their focus on the Assad regime, and Assad has played that.

In addition, you have had a certain lack of, I guess the way to say it is coordination between some of the support countries, and there are a lot of reasons for that, so that there hasn't been as powerful of an effort as there might have been.

Now that is changing a little bit. There have been some personnel changes within the framework of that support structure. And I think that there is a lot more coordinated and effective effort with respect to Syria beginning to take shape.

In addition to that, the huge infusion of Hezbollah and Iran changed the game somewhat on the ground while the other people were sidetracked, focusing on the extremists. So that is part of what has shifted somewhat temporarily for Assad.

But I say temporarily because I don't believe that the support countries, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, Qatar, et cetera, are going to ever stop until Assad is gone. So he may have a breather in the interim, but this fight is going to go on.

And therefore, what Senator Graham was saying earlier is the biggest guarantee is that a whole bunch of people are going to suffer.

We were working effectively with Russia up until recently, obviously, with respect to this, and it is a question mark where that is going to go.

Now Russia was extremely helpful with respect to the chemical weapons effort, because of their influence on the regime and their ties to it. And we were also helpful because the President made it clear that if there wasn't some alternative, he was going to strike. And neither the Russians nor Assad wanted that to happen.

So the President's decision, coupled with the cooperation that ensued thereafter, got this regime in place to remove the chemical weapons.

I would say about 30 percent of the chemical weapons, a third of them are now removed and under control. We have the locations where the rest of them are now contained in 12 different locations. We have to move them from there to the port in Latakia.

And we believe that that can be done in about 35 to 40 days. We have put that proposal before the OPCW and before the Russians. The Russians were helpful in reducing the amount of time the Assad regime was proposing to use, which was 100 days, down to 62. We are now on a 62-day schedule.

We believe that can be reduced by another 20 to 25 days, and we would like to see that done. Whether or not we can succeed in getting that done will depend to some degree on the outcome of events that we are obviously all focused on with respect to Ukraine, and so forth.

My hope is it will not interfere, that what happens in Ukraine will not interfere. I think Russia maintains a significant interest in not having these chemical weapons loose, not having them fall into the hands of terrorists, particularly since they are proximate neighbor. And therefore, my hope is we will continue no matter what.

But we are focused on getting them out.

Now the end deadline for this is June, not April. So, in fact, we are operating within the timeframe still. I still believe it is possible to achieve this. And we are going to stay focused on it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

TRADE WITH IRAN

Mr. Secretary, I am almost out of time, but I wanted to raise the issue of Iran, because one of the things that is giving me pause, and I am sure others as well, is the increase in exports of their oil and the interest that has been professed and the delegations from a number of countries to Iran in this period that makes it appear that sanctions are going to be lifted in a way that I think is not helpful to the ultimate outcome of any agreement.

So can you speak to what we are doing to discourage some of our European partners from sending trade delegations to Iran and how we keep the pressure on in this interim period?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely.

Senator LEAHY. And if we could have that briefly, because I now have been alerted that we are going to have votes, and we are going to have to cut this off when the votes start, and I don't want to cut off while there are others.

Secretary KERRY. I will move as fast as I can.

Let me tell you that I have been personally in touch with foreign ministers of countries where we have heard there might be a trade delegation. We have made it crystal clear that Iran is not open for business. They have accepted that. They are not cutting deals. There are people who have traveled, but there have not been new deals. And where there have been, we have told people that if they transgress any component of the sanctions regime, their businesses will be sanctioned. They accept that.

Now the fact is that Iran needs between \$60 billion to \$70 billion a year to finance its imports. In the entire first step agreement here, there are maybe \$6 billion to \$7 billion that will be released through the increase in the oil export, and that is legit under the process that we created.

But no sanction has been lifted. Nothing in the architecture of the sanctions regime has been changed whatsoever.

Iran's economy contracted by 6 percent last year. It is expected to contract again this year. Inflation remains at almost 40 percent. And we are just a very, very clear that 2 months into this, very little additional economic impact has flowed to Iran for a number of reasons—because banks are uncertain how to deal with it, there is a lot of uncertainty about where this is going to go, our strict

enforcement of the sanctions has in fact acted as a deterrent to many people deciding to get engaged.

And we have sent very strong messages through Treasury and the State Department that there will be consequences to anybody who tries to circumvent them.

And one last thing, we have sanctioned additional people.

Senator LEAHY. Some Senators are not going to get a chance to ask questions if we don't keep ongoing.

We are going to go Senator Kirk, Senator Coons, Senator Bozeman, Senator Blunt.

Senator Kirk.

IRANIAN FUNDING FOR HEZBOLLAH

Senator KIRK. Thank you. I will, Mr. Secretary, bring to your attention a chart that we have done on the cash flow into Iran.

We estimate that Iran had about \$20 billion ready liquid assets before the P5+1, and now has about \$25 billion and that is the additional oil revenues that you talked about, and money released by the United States back to Iran, which equals about 50 years of Hezbollah payments—that Iran now has. With an improving cash flow position, I would expect that we would see even more terrorism with this additional money available to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, with all due respect, the fact is that Iran has huge economic problems. And I am guaranteeing you that whatever additional flow of money there was going to them is not all flowing—I can't tell you the amount—to Hezbollah because they have enormous challenges at home and demand on that money.

There is no way Iran is better off when we are taking somewhere between \$15 billion and \$30 billion and putting it into a frozen asset fund. That is what is happening right now.

And so they are losing. They are losing enormous sums of money, more than \$100 billion that is now frozen, and growing in its amount, because the amount that our sanctions are depriving them of.

As I have said, the release of this money—in fact, I don't even agree with that figure. There is no way that the release of the funds under the agreement has resulted in that, and I will tell you why, because the funds are only released on an incremental basis, month-to-month. And we are only 2 months in.

And so there is no way they have received. I don't know what the total amount has, I mean, it may be \$1 billion or so.

Senator KIRK. Let me interrupt you to say that I believe the first payment to the Iranian delegation from the P5+1, it is paid for and rented by a \$400 million regular payment.

Of course, I know why the foreign minister is there, of course I know why he is there, because he is being paid to be there.

I had a long discussion along with Congressman Israel with the Iranian foreign minister, who is a long and eloquent Holocaust denier. Has he raised that subject with you?

Secretary KERRY. No, but I raised it with him on one occasion. But we are focused on the nuclear negotiation right now, Senator.

Senator KIRK. I would just follow up and say it is about \$1.55 billion released under the interim agreement to Iran that we estimate.

At \$100 million a year payments by Iran to Hezbollah, that is a lot of Hezbollah terrorism.

Secretary KERRY. Well, if it is going to them, if they have money to give to Hezbollah, Senator—I mean, Senator, Hezbollah is fighting in Syria. They are paying for that. They are supporting it. No question about it.

But, you know——

Senator KIRK. Mr. Secretary, I am going to forward to you a list of 280 Americans who have been murdered by Hezbollah. This is broken down by State, including those from Illinois, Melvin Holmes and David Gay and John Phillips Jr., who I knew, who attended in my church in Wilmette, and Adam Sommerhof, and Eric Sturghill and Eric Walker and Eric Pulliam, were all from Illinois.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, look, I am glad that we have designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization, and we have led the effort to make sure that Europe has followed now and labeled them a terrorist organization.

And if I had my druthers, obviously, we would like to see them disappear. But we are working at dealing with Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations in many different ways.

But I do believe that we are on the right track with respect to this first step agreement with Iran, because the alternatives are not as productive as the possibility of being able to reach an agreement through the negotiating process.

Senator KIRK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Graham.

And, Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for your tireless engagement and focus on the challenges that we face around the world, but particularly at this time of real difficulty in the Middle East, in Crimea, and elsewhere around the world.

I will just simply add my voice to others on this committee who have urged increased support for Jordan, increased focus on ensuring that we do in fact deliver on the opportunity here to remove CBW from Syria; commend you for your tireless focus on trying to resolve one of the longest standing challenges we face in the world, the tensions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and urge you to continue to consult closely with Congress as you continue to make good on the prospect of peace around Iran's illicit nuclear weapons program.

I stand with many of my colleagues in ensuring that we provide you the resources you need in order to carry forward on any agreement delivered, and that that ultimate agreement prevent any pathway, whether through uranium or plutonium, to a nuclear weapons capability for Iran.

I also was pleased in your opening statement that you emphasized the importance of economic engagement with Africa and the prospects it holds for our country for job creation as well as sus-

taining our vital investments in PEPFAR, in MCC, and in other programs.

Given the impending votes and the number of other Senators waiting, let me just mention a few topics across Africa. And then to the extent we have time for your response, I would welcome it.

AFRICA INITIATIVES

First, I look forward to working with you and the chairman and others on this committee to ensure that there are the resources needed to support work on fighting wildlife trafficking. I want to commend you for taking a leadership role in co-chairing the Presidential Task Force on Wildlife Trafficking. And I want to make sure there are resources to support that national strategy.

Second, as you referenced in your opening statement, there is a renewed wave of violence in Sudan, as well as in South Sudan, and I want to make sure that we have the resources to provide humanitarian support. There has been renewed aerial bombing in the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile, and a renewal of violence by the Janjaweed elements within Sudan.

There are a range of challenges in Sudan and South Sudan, and you have been tireless in working hard to help give birth to a newly free country of South Sudan. I would hate to see us miss this opportunity when there are so many other things going on around the world.

The two things I wanted to focus on most of this list, Power Africa, a tremendous initiative, one that I think really does hold out great promise for the continent of Africa and for the United States. Yet there is no specific request for this initiative, and I am concerned that AID is funding it out of existing accounts. With a significant number of difficult elections on the continent in the year ahead, I hope that we are not underfunding democracy and governance efforts by state and AID.

And if there is a way we can work together to sustain Power Africa beyond the next 3 years, to lay out a framework for its funding and for its continuance, I think that could make a dramatic difference in meeting development and humanitarian and strategic needs, and in creating real opportunity for American business in partnership with our allies on the continent.

Last, the Central African Republic continues to be deeply concerning. Twenty years after the Rwandan genocide, there are steadily escalating incidents of violence and a division within the country seemingly along ethnic and religious lines.

Given the shortfall we face in our peacekeeping accounts, I would be interested in hearing your views on how we can meet our obligations. I think it affects our reputation in the U.N. and globally when we support a peacekeeping mission, but then don't meet our commitments.

I was glad to support the work of our chair in SFRC in ensuring that we made our obligations around the IMF. Other members have spoken to that previously in this hearing. I would just love to hear from you what we can do to make sure that we make good on our commitment across all of these fields, the potential of Power Africa and peacekeeping, in particular.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Well, thanks. Because of the time thing, first of all, let me just say I want to thank you, Senator, for your unbelievable leadership. You are terrific in your dedication and tenacity with respect to all issues in Africa. The Foreign Relations Committee always had a terrific tradition of having someone who picked up that banner, and you have done it brilliantly, and I thank you for that.

Secondly, on the issues that you raised, we really ought to have a longer conversation, and I am prepared to do that.

Power Africa, we believe, is adequately funded. The President has designated the goal of trying to get about 10,000 MW of power. We have identified 5,000, and we have identified funding and projects, 20-some projects, that will provide that. So we are proceeding forward.

We are doing pretty well at it with existing U.S. Government resources and working the process. But I am game to think about how, if we can augment that, to get there faster, I am happy to do it.

Senator COONS. And to be clear, my goal is not to simply expend U.S. Government resources. In fact, my general goal is to reduce our overall expenditures by making them smarter. I just think there are opportunities here to leverage private sector partnership with the public sector, over the long term.

Secretary KERRY. Fair enough. We are currently designated to \$7 billion out of OPEC and Ex-Im Bank in order to try to achieve this. And private sector commitments total \$14 billion, which is not insignificant.

So I think we are on track, but let's work at it and see how we can leverage it further.

On the peacekeeping, some of the missions have reached a point where we can begin to close some of them, East Timor, we are looking at reduced assessments for Liberia, Haiti. But then we have new ones that have come on, as you know.

We have increased by \$342 million our commitments for Mali, Somalia, South Sudan. We put additional money beyond that into South Sudan, by the way, on a humanitarian basis.

And my sense is that we have another problem, that we pay at I think it is 27-point-some percent, but we are being assessed by the U.N. at 28.4 percent, so we are behind in that regard, and we are going to have to think about long-term how we are going to meet that arrearage and deal with it.

Senator COONS. I am eager to work with you on that. Seeing the press of time, thank you very much. I understand you have more pressing obligations. I look forward to a chance to talk through these issues when the current situation is resolved to some extent.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you.

Senator LEAHY. Senator Boozman.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PEPFAR

And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here with us. I just want you to comment on a couple things very quickly. We have all of these pressing problems going on throughout the world right now,

but I would like for us not to lose sight of a couple programs I think they are working very, very well.

PEPFAR, in fact, I think you called this the most successful foreign assistance program ever. I know that you have been very, very supportive, President Bush, now President Obama, lots of different individuals on both sides of the aisle.

Can you just comment on it real quickly and reassure us about PEPFAR's sustainability into the future?

Secretary KERRY. The answer is, we believe we have funded it. The global fund is slightly reduced, but actually we have plussed that up.

There is no question in my mind—I am proud to say that that effort really began in the Foreign Relations Committee and with Bill Frist, when he was here. And we had support from Jesse Helms. We passed it unanimously in the Senate. It was the first AIDS legislation for global efforts. And that led to PEPFAR.

President Bush made a tremendous commitment to it. I think the original \$15 billion and then it got doubled, and President Obama has continued it.

We are looking at the potential now of a first-time-ever AIDS-free generation of kids, as a result of where we are. We believe the funding is at a level, notwithstanding a slight reduction, where we are going to be able to not just continue it, but take it to fruition in its targeted goal. So I think we feel very confident about it.

Senator BOOZMAN. Good. The 10-year anniversary, 1 million children born AIDS-free. I think that is something we can be very, very proud of.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, the MCC, again, along the same vein, I think it was ranked first among international donor organizations by an NGO that tracks transparency. Based on this success, can you again talk a little bit about how we can replicate this model, perhaps, and increase public accountability and transparency with some of our other assistance programs?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely, Senator.

MCC, which I am privileged to chair the board of as Secretary and have had several meetings, is doing a tremendous job of providing a different model for how you approach development funding.

The President increased the funding by 11 percent. It is up \$101 million to just about \$1 billion. I think the total amount of our development money is some \$20-point-some billion, so we are looking at 1/20 of our development money done in this new metric-oriented, measurements, results-oriented determinative process.

And it works effectively in certain situations. I am not saying it can translate into everything that we do in terms of development. But we have some new, since 2004, we have signed some 27 compacts. A compact we sign with a country is a certain approach, a certain set of expectations for what they have to do—reforms in government process. It is a tremendous lever for good governance, for transparency, for accountability. And we are very high on it and are trying to figure out how much more we can extend it as a significant new model tool for development on a global basis.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Senator BOOZMAN. And finally, CAR. This is an area that again, with all that is going on in the world, it has had tremendous problems. We have had to pull out our diplomatic community. Can you briefly touch on it and kind of give us your perspective? I know Samantha Power has been working hard in that regard in her abilities. Perhaps a plan of returning our diplomatic presence, where you see that going?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are working very closely with the French, I think you know. And we are providing an additional \$100 million to assist the African Union-led International Support Mission, MISCA. We are providing strategic airlift. We are providing equipment and training for the forces that are deploying there.

In the last 2 months, we have airlifted some 850 Burundian troops in, 860-plus Rwandan troops, so the total number is somewhere around 6,000 troops now.

What has been missing is accountability. You have this incredible problem of young people running around with guns, tribal warfare, and so forth, and there is no enforcer, which is why we have pressed in the African Union, we pressed the international community, to try to support it. It is not just there. It was with M23 and the Great Lakes region and elsewhere. Thugs with guns who are running loose, and there is no countervailing government capacity.

So what we are trying to do is to build the capacity. And we are grateful to the French. They have been terrific leaders in this effort, very committed, historically and otherwise. And we are doing our part to try to provide order through a government force that is present that holds people accountable for their actions and begins to lead people toward a development agenda, toward a governance agenda that is the only way ultimately to provide the stability necessary.

This is an area where there are huge resources at stake, and that is the part of the battle.

Unbelievably resource-rich, unexploited through a legitimate market of any kind, and that creates a lot of this chase for riches, which is at the butt of a gun.

So we are trying to come in with some development capacity, governance, leadership capacity, and creating the kind of force that could help to provide stability, so those other things can take hold.

Senator BOOZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Senator LEAHY. Senator Blunt.

Senator BLUNT. Thank you, Chairman. Thanks to you and Senator Graham for holding this hearing and all you are doing to try to focus on the positive impact of aid and what it can mean in creating the kind of relationships we need.

To try to cover a couple topics quickly that I think may not have been talked about yet, which is pretty hard to do at the end of this hearing, Secretary.

And thank you for your time and your tireless efforts in this great responsibility you have accepted in this job.

CAMP LIBERTY

Could you comment a little bit on what plans we might have for the disposition of the 3,000, roughly 3,000, Iranian dissidents at Camp Liberty in Iraq, and whether our allies, others in the world, are willing to take some of these people? And whether we are? Can you give me a sense?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, I have appointed a special adviser, special envoy, a very qualified lawyer, who is really tackling this on a day-to-day basis with exceptional energy and focus.

We have been able to place, I think it is around 300 or so. The Albanians have graciously agreed to accept some.

Our goal is to get all 3,000 out of there, Camp Hurriya. We really want to get them out of there. We know that they are at risk. We know there are dangers. And we are trying to find the countries that are willing to do this. It is a tough negotiation.

Frankly, it would be greatly assisted by our ability to make a determination about how many we are going to take, and that is where our focus is right now. We are making an analysis of that and some judgments. The sooner we can get that concluded and moving, I think the better opportunity we are going to have to get people relocated elsewhere.

We had some problems, incidentally, in the beginning when I first came in, I learned that there were some problems internally in the camp, in the administrative process and the willingness of people to submit to interviews. And I think that has been resolved, but we have had a lot of difficulties in being able to really get the population properly vetted and defined, so we know who might be able to go where and what appropriate accommodations could be made.

Senator BLUNT. It is my view that time is not our friend there.

Secretary KERRY. I agree completely.

Senator BLUNT. Nor for the people at the camp. And you agree with that?

Secretary KERRY. I totally agree with that.

Senator BLUNT. Whatever I can do to be helpful and whatever I can do to encourage your efforts to find places for these people to go while they still can hopefully get there would be important.

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely.

TURKEY AND SYRIAN RELATIONS

Senator BLUNT. Today in Turkey, there are tens of thousands of protesters protesting about the funeral of a 15-year-old boy who died after being hit by a canister, a tear gas canister, several months ago. It seems to me that Erdogan is not as helpful as he could be in a lot of areas, but one is that large Syrian border. What is our relationship there now? Are we able to try to encourage more help in solving the Syrian situation from Turkey?

Secretary KERRY. The answer is we would like to get additional help. The Turks have been very forthcoming. We have been working with them very closely.

We would like to see greater cooperation from them on the border pieces. There are too many people moving through, particularly

in the eastern part and coming down to the northern part of Syria in the northeastern part.

We have spoken to them about that. We have an ongoing, very healthy dialogue with people on the ground, working with them very closely. Their foreign minister is deeply engaged. He has been very, very forthcoming, very helpful to us.

There is an election, as you know. There is a lot of political dynamic at play in Turkey right now, and it is difficult in the middle of that to get all the focus that you might like to have on this kind of an issue and to resolve some of it.

But we are working also with Turkey, I might add, on the rapprochement with Israel, resolution of the blockade on Gaza issue that ran into problems with the Amorey Mulveek a few years ago.

And I think it is fair to say that, at this moment, they are pretty inward looking in terms of the electoral process.

Senator BLUNT. And that is the end of this month, as I recall?

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Senator BLUNT. That is end of this month? March 30, is it?

Secretary KERRY. It is April, isn't it?

Senator BLUNT. It is April? But soon?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, soon.

Senator BLUNT. On a topic that I am sure has already been discussed, but on the view of whether Iran, and I am not suggesting this is your position, but whether Iran should ever be allowed to have the component parts that they could put together to make a weapon, whether they have a weapon or not, I would want to be strongly listed on the side they should not be allowed to have that.

NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT

And I would like you take comment on a couple things. One, if they did have the capacity to enrich, is it your view that we can monitor that in a way that would be satisfactory? And two, how do you keep that capacity to enrich from proliferating to other countries that we have been holding back, that have nuclear power, but we haven't let them have this capacity because of the danger that up until now most powers have understood was a danger if you let the proliferation of enrichment occur?

So those are really my last two questions.

Secretary KERRY. Well, most countries that have chosen to pursue some kind of nuclear power capacity have not chosen necessarily to enrich for themselves. Some have, so there is a precedent. It is not the majority, obviously.

There are different reasons for one country or another having an argument that they might want to enrich, to some degree.

My current judgment, you say, can we monitor? At this point, not completely, no. And that is why we are negotiating. It is to make sure that we can completely, ultimately.

And how do you prevent the enrichment from leading elsewhere? I think that the constraints under which a country would have to operate if they are going to have some enrichment are really significant. I mean, we are talking about a need to know beyond reasonable doubt, not guess, but to know, what is happening on any given day, in any given facility.

So this is all subject to the negotiation. This is not currently decided.

And you asked me, I think, if we could consider at this moment in time that we have the ability to be able to know, or something? And the answer is that is actually what the subject of this negotiation is now.

Senator BLUNT. And you think that negotiation could produce—

Secretary KERRY. Well, we hope it could. I don't know if it can yet, Senator. Honestly, I don't know.

I know what we want to ask for. I don't know if we can get a yes to it.

But you raised the question of warheads, et cetera. It is very much a subject of the negotiation. It has to be.

And any of that technology has got to be part of this. Now that is distinct from missile, conceivably. It is a harder argument to make on some range of conventional weaponry that that falls under this.

But certainly, R&D and warhead development or anything like that would very much fall squarely into the concerns that we would want to be talking about in negotiation.

Senator LEAHY. We have 6 minutes left on the roll call on the floor.

Senator BLUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator LEAHY. So I am not going to ask my further questions, other than to note, and we should talk about this later Secretary Kerry, we were lobbied, Congress was, to say that the Palestinians, prior to the UNESCO, we would show how tough we were in our support of Israel by withdrawing payments to UNESCO. What that meant, of course, we lost our vote in UNESCO, so we are not able to protect America's interests, or Israel's interests, there. All we do is watch the Russians, the Iranians, the Syrians, the Chinese, the Palestinians have the vote.

So I hope you work with the Congress. I would like to see us get a waiver so we can get back in there and actually do what is best in America's interests.

And we need to address the Avena court decisions on the rights of consular access for foreigners arrested in this country. The Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, and Justice all support doing something on this. Chief Justice Roberts has. It is overdue. We should do something on it.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. I know you have a meeting. A little bit of homework here.

Could you inform the committee in writing, there is a debate in Congress whether we should sell Apaches to the Egyptian regime. I think, Mr. Secretary, that the Egyptian army has not met the goals that we all would hope. They are not transitioning to democracy in a meaningful way, in my view.

Could you inform the committee, in your view, what kind of role should the Congress play regarding aid to Egypt, particularly military aid? I don't want to send the wrong signal and undercut efforts to get the transition to democracy.

Do you agree with the statement by the DNI that the Al Qaeda presence in Syria is building up and is becoming a threat to the homeland?

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

When it comes to Israel, it has been our position that the Palestinians should recognize the Jewish state as part of their negotiating position, is that correct?

Secretary KERRY. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Secondly, you can do this in writing, if you like, do you think President Abbas has the ability to speak effectively for Hamas regarding any potential peace agreement?

Secretary KERRY. Part of our discussion at this point in time, Senator, is a requirement before some kind of agreement were to come into effect that that issue would have to be resolved.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you very much.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator LEAHY. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much.

I thank the members for their clear questions. We will keep the record open until Wednesday for any further questions, and I would urge you to answer them.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Department for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO JOHN F. KERRY

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Question. The United States recently decreased its pledge to the World Bank's International Development Association—the Bank's fund for helping the world's poorest countries. This drop hurts American leverage in at the Bank, creating more openings for China and others who may not share our priorities. Please elaborate on the U.S. commitment to the International Development Association and the international financial institutions as a whole.

Answer. The United States recently pledged \$3.87 billion to the International Development Association (IDA)—which represented a 5 percent decrease from its previous pledge. While the administration would have liked to have pledged more, the \$3.87 billion reflects the very difficult budget environment that we face. The U.S. pledge was still enough to make the United States the second largest contributor to the fund's record-breaking replenishment cycle, which yielded over \$52 billion in pledges.

IDA, the Asian Development Fund, and the African Development Fund—the concessional windows at the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and African Development Bank, respectively—provide grants to the world's poorest countries and support key U.S. development priorities. The United States remains one of the largest contributors to these funds, and our financial contributions send an important signal about the U.S. commitment to alleviating poverty and fostering economic growth and stability to other donors and developing countries.

Question. Countries such as China, India, Turkey, and others have been gaining an economic foothold in Africa, too often at American expense. With 7 out of 10 of the fastest growing economies in the world being in Africa, the U.S. has a great opportunity to invest while supporting domestic jobs. I was pleased that part of my legislative efforts to address this issue became law in December and that the administration must designate a senior coordinator to boost U.S. exports to Africa. Can you comment on this larger challenge in Africa and administration efforts to help address it?

Answer. The Department of State shares your view that Africa represents a great opportunity for U.S. companies to generate economic growth both in Africa and domestically.

Commercial activities of other countries in Africa have generally not hindered investment opportunities for our firms.

The U.S. Government's (USG's) *Doing Business in Africa* (DBIA) Campaign encourages U.S. businesses to take advantage of the many export and investment opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The USG is encouraging U.S. companies—with a focus on small- and medium-sized businesses and African Diaspora-owned businesses—to trade with and invest in Africa. To support this initiative and in coordination with the Department of Commerce's Advocacy Center, our Embassies and Consulates provide robust commercial advocacy support of U.S. firms competing in Sub-Saharan Africa and facilitate numerous high value trade and investment missions and deals in key sectors, such as healthcare, agribusiness, and infrastructure and energy. The Presidential initiatives of Power Africa and Trade Africa harness the efforts of many U.S. Government agencies and the private sector to increase trade and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank), and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) are building upon current assistance to U.S. business. For example, the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Development and Finance Center opened its doors in 2013 at the U.S. Consulate General in Johannesburg, South Africa, to provide the U.S. private sector, as well as our Sub-Saharan African partners, with a centralized means to identify and access U.S. Government support for clean energy export and investment needs.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARY L. LANDRIEU

Question. As you know, last fall Senator Blunt, Congresswoman Granger, Congresswoman Bass, and I introduced the "Children in Families First" Act and have since gained the support of nearly 60 Members of Congress for this legislation. At the core of this bill is a proposal for making necessary structural changes to the State Department's current approach to international child welfare. More specifically, we have proposed to unite issues related to international child welfare, including international adoption, in a single office to be housed in the State Department's Secretariat for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. We believe such changes are necessary at the Department of State to ensure that, both internally and externally, international child welfare is treated as more than an immigration enforcement issue, which its current placement in the Bureau of Consular Affairs suggests that it is. We have seen the same approach of centralizing and empowering an office or bureau work to great effect in fighting terrorism, combatting trafficking, providing humanitarian assistance and resettlement to refugees, and providing AIDS relief and seek now to emulate that success on behalf of vulnerable children. It is my understanding that the U.S. Department of State opposes this effort and seeks to keep these functions in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which handles border security and overseas citizen services, and has no real mandate or resources to engage in international child welfare issues writ large, and which, in our view, has a less than ideal track record even in its narrow mandate of implementing the Hague adoption and abduction conventions.

—Can you affirm that this is in fact the State Department's position and help clarify for the members of this subcommittee why that is so?

—Do you agree that international child welfare requires a dedicated Bureau or Office in the Department of State?

—Do you agree that international child welfare is more than a consular issue and as such needs to be handled elsewhere in the Department than the Bureau of Consular Affairs?

—In the same way that refugee resettlement is part of the Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration precisely because it is a tool of refugee protection, do you agree that international adoption is a tool of protection for children living without families, not simply an immigration enforcement issue?

Answer. The U.S. Department of State helps to serve and protect children around the world. Our global presence ensures that we are able to support children, youth, and their families through programmatic support and diplomatic engagement, under the leadership of the Chiefs of Mission of each U.S. Embassy and supported through the expertise of the Department's various offices and bureaus engaged on children's issues. Such policies, programs, and diplomatic efforts help strengthen families and protect children. Additionally, they help to support the U.S. Action Plan on Children in Adversity (APCA), which aims to promote a world in which children grow up

within protective family care and free from deprivation, exploitation, violence, and danger.

Many bureaus and offices across the Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) diplomatically and programmatically engage on children's issues, including on matters related directly to international child welfare and protection. This work is accomplished via multifaceted approaches to improving health, education, security, social and child welfare systems, capacity to provide humanitarian assistance, governance, rule of law, and the protection and advancement of human rights across the globe.

This multifaceted support extends beyond the expertise and capacity of any single office, bureau, or portfolio. It includes U.S. support for UNICEF's child protection-related efforts around the world; economic support aimed at strengthening families affected by HIV/AIDS to ensure that they can stay together; support for child welfare systems that includes addressing children outside of family care and promoting permanent family placements, made possible by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); support for family reunification and child protection programming in humanitarian emergencies through State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance at USAID; and other bilateral and multilateral efforts. These are just a few examples.

The Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs, which fulfills many of the Department's day-to-day responsibilities as the U.S. Central Authority under the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention) and the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Hague Abduction Convention), plays an important part in these efforts by supporting other countries in their implementation of either or both Conventions. Protecting children and families in the intercountry adoption process through the Hague Adoption Convention and ensuring that ethical and transparent intercountry adoption remains an option for children, when it is in a child's best interests, are important pieces of the Department's overall effort to protect children and promote healthy child development and responsive and supportive child welfare systems.

The Department remains committed to working with Congress to ensure that U.S. support for children in adversity is robust, and that U.S. implementation of the Hague Adoption Convention is strong, effective, and transparent—without the establishment of a new, costly, and unnecessary bureaucracy. The creation of a new bureau or office within the Department focused on international child welfare or intercountry adoption will create overlapping mandates within the Department and with USAID. It would confuse and undermine multiple, well established roles and responsibilities of individual components of both agencies, and would be detrimental to their key relationships with U.S. and foreign governmental and non-governmental partners. A new bureau or office could also undermine existing capacities for effective, multilayered interventions, interfering with efforts to integrate programs across sectors so that they most benefit children, their families, and the communities in which they live. Centralizing activities under one office, with one mandate, may diminish existing activities that are not explicitly “child-focused,” yet are still fundamental for children in adversity, such as programs focusing on nutrition, shelter, livelihood, gender-based violence, women and girls' empowerment, and humanitarian assistance. It would also be inappropriate for a new Department office with an international child welfare mandate to be singularly focused on international adoption as its sole remedy.

The Department and USAID have taken steps over the last year to improve coordination and collaboration in order to maximize the impact of our work to improve the lives of children in adversity. APCA was launched at the White House in December 2012; individual agency implementation plans were published in September 2013; programs from Department bureaus and offices that were not already consistent with the APCA's objectives have been increasingly aligning with them in new and ongoing programs; and the first meeting of the Senior Policy Operating Group on Children in Adversity (SPOG-CA) convened in February. In the interim, with support from the Department's Senior Advisor for Development, the Department created a Task Force on Children in Adversity (TFCA) to promote APCA and improve internal coordination and information sharing across the Department and with USAID. The TFCA also coordinates to identify complementary and strategic diplomatic, programmatic, and policy actions for the range of Department bureaus and offices that are already working to assist children in adversity globally. We expect that the SPOG-CA will reconvene soon under the leadership of the reformulated USAID Center for Excellence on Children in Adversity.

International child welfare is a complex issue which requires a multitude of actors and responses. We believe by focusing on coordination we can enhance programming

and best demonstrate the U.S. Government's commitment to assisting children around the world.

Question. A number of prominent organizations that support international child welfare and adoption wrote to you in December to request that you take immediate action to address shortcomings in the Department of State's implementation of The Hague Adoption Convention. To my knowledge, that letter has not been answered.

—How do you explain the fact that there have been no reported international adoptions from any country that has become a Hague partner with the United States since 2008?

—Do you agree with the criticism in the letter that the Office of Children's Issues has failed to implement a transparent and effective system for determining partner country compliance with the Hague Convention?

—If so, what steps are you taking to correct the situation?

Answer. The Department of State supports intercountry adoptions. As the U.S. Central Authority for adoptions, the Department's primary goal is to ensure that all U.S. intercountry adoptions are ethical, transparent, and protect children and families. To accomplish this, the Department maintains strong lines of communication with all Hague Adoption Convention (Convention) countries in order to promote cooperation, coordination, and the best interests of children. Every year, children from countries that are parties to the Convention are adopted by loving U.S. families. In fiscal years 2013 and 2012, 46 percent and 37 percent of all U.S. adoptions were from Convention countries, respectively. China remains the top country of origin for U.S. intercountry adoptions, and last year, hundreds of children were adopted from Bulgaria, Colombia, India, Latvia, and the Philippines—all Convention countries.

Since the Convention entered into force for the United States, 15 new countries have become party to the Convention: Cabo Verde, Fiji, Greece, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Montenegro, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Swaziland, Togo, and Vietnam. The annual number of intercountry adoptions from the majority of these 15 countries did not change significantly after the entry into force of the Convention. Historically, few children immigrated to the United States through intercountry adoption from each of these countries, with the exception of Kazakhstan, Rwanda, and Vietnam.

Several factors in all of the countries affect the number of U.S. adoptions. Five new Convention countries (Greece, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, and Seychelles) have developed child welfare and adoption systems and/or have few children in need of intercountry adoption. Ireland provides a good example. Ireland identifies solely as an adoption receiving country, not a country of origin. Ireland's Central Authority strictly applies the Convention's subsidiarity principle with the result that most Irish orphans are placed domestically, and few children are eligible for intercountry adoption. Adoptions from Greece, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, and Seychelles are similarly very rare, as they were before these countries joined the Convention. Family preservation resources and effective, permanent domestic placement options are available in those countries.

Three other countries (Rwanda, Senegal, and Swaziland) have suspended all intercountry adoptions while reviewing their ability to implement the Convention. A fourth, Kazakhstan, temporarily suspended intercountry adoptions to the United States in August 2012, citing concerns about the welfare of adopted children related to a number of very grave, but isolated, cases of abuse in the United States. The Department had announced its ability to issue Hague Adoption and Custody Certificates in incoming Convention adoptions from Kazakhstan in May 2012. Since 2012, the Department and U.S. Embassy Astana have made every effort to respond to Kazakhstani concerns and persuade the Government of Kazakhstan to resume intercountry adoptions for U.S. families. Our efforts include multiple, high-level bilateral meetings in the United States and Kazakhstan, facilitation of consular access of Kazakhstani officials to adopted Kazakhstani children in the United States, and communication with U.S. parents of adopted children on the importance of meeting post-adoption requirements.

On the other hand, a number of countries, including Cabo Verde and Fiji, had not fully implemented the Convention at the time it entered into force. Both countries are still developing procedures to implement the Convention and the capacity to carry out Convention safeguards. Under U.S. law, the Department is not able to process Convention adoptions for countries that have failed to develop adoption systems that uphold these safeguards. The Department continues to work with such countries to assist with Convention implementation.

The Department's efforts in Vietnam and Lesotho in this regard are particularly noteworthy. Following the Convention's entry into force on February 1, 2012, Vietnam has only recently trained its central and provincial adoption officials on the Convention and related new laws. Resuming adoptions with Vietnam is among U.S.

Embassy Hanoi's highest priorities, and the U.S. Special Advisor for Children's Issues has travelled to meet with Vietnamese adoption officials four times since 2010 to advocate for successful reforms. Additionally, USAID support for UNICEF on adoptions has been instrumental in improving Vietnam's legal and regulatory system. Currently, the Department is working towards establishing a limited adoption program for children with special needs, older children, and children in sibling groups. The Government of Vietnam is currently vetting U.S. adoption service providers and has indicated that it plans to authorize two. (For more information, please see the Department's September Adoption Notice, available here: http://adoption.state.gov/country_information/country_specific_alerts_notices.php?alert_notice_type=notices&alert_notice_file=vietnam_7). The Department is hopeful that we will be able to announce our ability to issue Hague Certificates for adoptions from Vietnam later this year. In Lesotho, the Convention entered into force in December 2012. In February 2013, Lesotho lifted its suspension of intercountry adoptions, which had been in place as it implemented Convention procedures. We determined we would be able to process adoptions with Lesotho beginning March 1, 2013. The Government of Lesotho has authorized one U.S. adoption service provider, published new procedures on intercountry adoptions fees, and is now processing adoptions.

Additionally, three countries became party to the Convention on April 1, 2014: Croatia, Haiti, and Serbia. The Department has since announced positive determinations for these newest Convention partners, as well as for Montenegro, where the Convention entered into force in 2012. The Department has announced our ability to issue Hague Adoption or Custody Certificates for all Convention adoptions from these countries.

As the Central Authority for intercountry adoption, the Department must certify that adoptions are in compliance with the Convention. The examples provided above illustrate our commitment to this process. If a country's adoption system does not uphold the safeguards of the Convention, adoptions finalized in that country are not considered to be compliant. It is therefore instrumental for the Department to assess each country's ability to implement procedural safeguards and governing structures consistent with Convention standards. We accomplish this through review of a country's laws, procedures, practices, and infrastructure. Our Web site, adoption.state.gov, provides a thorough description of our approach.

The Department has taken several additional steps to increase transparency and public dialogue as this review process unfolds. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) posts frequent Adoption Notices and Alerts to adoption.state.gov on changes or expected changes to a country's adoption laws, procedures, practices, or infrastructure as information is made available. CA also hosts quarterly public stakeholder meetings for non-profit organizations and U.S. adoption service providers to provide updates and answer questions.

If the Department determines that a country does not meet the required standards, we strongly encourage the country to implement the necessary legal framework and procedures to uphold the Convention's standards and principles before becoming a party to the Convention. The Department will also encourage the country's officials to consider establishing procedures to allow adoptions initiated prior to the Convention's entry into force be completed through the pre-Convention procedures. The Department's goal is to prevent a disruption in adoptions and ensure that there is no unnecessary delay in processing pending adoptions due to the Convention entering into force.

Question. In a letter you sent to me on September 16, 2013, you indicated that the Department of State and USAID were moving forward aggressively to implement the Action Plan on Children in Adversity, which the White House released in December 2012, and which for the first time explicitly states that families for children is a priority goal of U.S. foreign policy. More specifically, you stated that you had recently formed a Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) made up of key players from the State Department and USAID and had directed them to lead implementation of the Action Plan. So is it fair then to say that this SPOG is the designated leader of the United States Government's efforts to implement the Action Plan for Children in Adversity and if so,

—In the 15 months since the National Action Plan on Children in Adversity was released, what concrete actions the Department of State taken to advance the Plan's implementation?

—How much funding did the U.S. State Department spend on programs or policies implemented in support of the Action Plan in fiscal year 2014? How much do you anticipate will be spent on activities related to the Action Plan in fiscal year 2015?

Answer. The umbrella of the National Action Plan for Children in Adversity provides an overarching platform and a welcome lens for ongoing State Department programs and activities, all of which address various dimensions of children in adversity around the world.

For instance, to support building strong beginnings for children in adversity, the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) supports protection activities including health and education programming for conflict-affected populations through humanitarian partners including the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). For example, UNRWA runs one of the largest education programs in the Middle East, serving more than 490,000 school-age children at over 700 schools in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. PRM also supports the No Lost Generation initiative, a campaign by the United Nations, governments, and international and non-governmental organizations to address the immediate and long-term impacts of the Syria crisis on a generation of children and youth in Syria and the Near East region.

In another example, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief has supported family care for children by spearheading the strengthening of child welfare and protection systems, including the enhancement of the social welfare workforce. If child welfare and protection systems are strong and working, then the services required for children in adversity will be in place. These system-strengthening efforts therefore serve to bolster all aspects of child welfare to support all children, including those who are outside of family care. For example, through PEPFAR support:

- In Uganda, more than 1,100 Community Development Officers and probation officers have completed training and attained university accreditation in child protection, and now provide services to 66,000 children.
- In South Africa, more than 2,000 para-professional social workers have been provided stipends and child welfare skills training. And a partnership with South Africa's Ministry of Social Development has helped support 10,000 new Child & Youth Care Worker positions by 2017. As a result, more than 1.4 million vulnerable children will be served.
- In Tanzania, 4,000 community volunteers provide support for vulnerable children through various implementing partners. In addition, a Twinning Center partnership has trained 2,408 para-social workers (PSWs) and 329 supervisors in 25 districts.

Diplomatically, the Department's Bureau of International Organizations supports the United Nations in promoting child survival and child development. Following June 2012's "Child Survival: Call to Action conference? meeting?" which the U.S. hosted along with India and Ethiopia, the United States is pleased to see that to date, representatives of 174 governments, 215 civil society partners, and 221 faith-based organizations have signed pledges to take action along with UNICEF. The United States is glad to be a partner with UNICEF in supporting this effort, which is believed to accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goal 4 and 5 targets, and ultimately help to end all preventable child and maternal deaths. The United States continues to support the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which supports and funds programs in more than 150 countries in an effort to achieve Millennium Development Goal 5 of improving maternal health, and in turn, also reduces maternal and child mortality.

Additionally, by delivering national statements in UN forums—including the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council, the UNICEF and UNFPA Executive Boards, and other UN organizations that support children—the United States calls on organizations and states to incorporate the needs of children in their planning and policies. The United States also emphasizes the particular needs, vulnerabilities, and potential of girls, and consistently raises these issues in UN forums and diplomatically with partner governments.

The Department of State also works through diplomatic channels to strongly support intercountry adoption as an essential part of a fully developed child welfare system. We promote ethical and transparent adoption processes for prospective adoptive parents, birth families, and children involved in intercountry adoptions, a process that ensures that an adoption is completed in the best interests of the child and when a domestic placement in the child's home country is not possible. The Office of Children's Issues, within the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs, engages bilaterally with foreign governments and collaborates with stakeholders in the adoption community and with our interagency partners on intercountry adoptions to promote these policy objectives. The Hague Adoption Convention is an important

tool in support of this goal. Ninety-three countries are currently party to the Convention, including the United States.

An important element related to concrete action and policy leadership includes the establishment of a Senior Policy Operating Group (SPOG) for Children in Adversity. This governmentwide, interagency body is co-led by the Department of State's Senior Advisor for Development and USAID's Center of Excellence for Children in Adversity (USAID/CECA). The SPOG is strengthened by the day-to-day coordination efforts of State's Task Force for Children in Adversity (TFCA), which works in partnership with USAID/CECA and the interagency working group led by USAID to advance the children in adversity agenda.

For example, TFCA and USAID/CECA recently collaborated to develop a Key Issue, or secondary budget code in the foreign assistance budget, called "Children in Adversity." The "Children in Adversity" Key Issue is formulated to match the objectives of the APCA and gives visibility to the funding of thematic areas that are not generally discernable in the foreign assistance budget. Going forward, the "Children in Adversity" Key Issue, combined with other ongoing efforts at State and USAID, does three things: (1) sends a signal to State and USAID that the children in adversity issue is being further elevated across the foreign assistance portfolio, (2) establishes a common definition for children in adversity within foreign assistance programming, and (3) strengthens existing efforts to thematically integrate children in adversity into the foreign assistance strategic planning, budgeting and performance management processes.

Finally, allocations for fiscal year 2014 foreign assistance appropriations are in the midst of being finalized; however, programs that support the world's most vulnerable population—children in adversity—are reflected throughout the budget. Similarly, the fiscal year 2015 request emphasizes the United States' continuing commitment to children.

Question. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not only an attack on that country's sovereignty but a threat to the stability of the entire region. One key aspect of Russian influence in Ukraine has been its energy exports, particularly natural gas flowing through Ukraine to the remainder of Europe. As you know, the administration recently proposed \$1 billion in loan guarantees to help insulate the Ukrainian economy from the effects of reduced energy subsidies from Russia—a measure that has been reinforced by recently passed legislation in the House and legislation pending in the Senate.

—In addition to these measures, how can the United States use its diplomatic influence and growing energy production to mitigate these threats?

Answer. Ukraine's sovereignty and independence is a strategic foreign policy priority for the United States, and no issue is more important than Ukraine's energy security. Ukraine's energy security, and the commitment of the United States to support Ukraine, was at the forefront of the U.S.-European Union (EU) Energy Council meeting which I chaired with EU High Representative Ashton, EU Energy Commissioner Oettinger, and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Poneman on April 2.

The United States is working with Ukraine, its western neighbors, the EU, and the private sector to provide gas from European companies to Ukraine to offset its reliance on Russian imports. We are seeking to provide urgently needed international financial support to Ukraine and encouraging Ukraine to use its foreign exchange reserves to finance gas purchases.

In addition to these short-term measures, we are working with other donors and the private sector to help Ukraine bridge to long-term increased self-sufficiency in gas by raising domestic production, through modernization of existing conventional fields and contracts negotiated in 2013 for unconventional gas development.

The United States is also working closely with the Government of Ukraine to increase energy efficiency practices, which will further decrease reliance on energy imports. The \$1 billion in loan guarantees provided by the United States will be available to help the Ukrainian Government ensure that increased energy costs, which will go into effect as early as May 1 as part of a reform package mandated by the IMF, will not adversely impact Ukraine's most vulnerable energy consumers.

Under the auspices of the U.S.-Ukraine Energy Security Working Group, the U.S. Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual and Ukrainian Minister of Energy Yuriy Prodan, will continue to advance these initiatives.

Question. Last July, the full Appropriations committee voted on a narrow waiver to the prohibition on funding UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). By a vote of 19–11, the full committee provided a waiver, as well as \$700,000, to the World Heritage program at UNESCO. For no good reason at all, the House deleted this line item, and refused to include it in the Omnibus spending package that was approved this January. Let me explain why I am so pas-

sionate about this issue. Poverty Point is a cultural and historic gem in Louisiana. It is a landmark relic from prehistoric, hunter-gatherer times, and is a collection of magnificent earthworks that were a commercial center for the region. If the Congress does not provide waiver authority and funding for the World Heritage Program, then we hurt Poverty Point's chances of being designated a World Heritage site. This would have significant economic impacts on my State. And by the way, there are 13 other States that are in the same situation.

—I see that the administration once again seeks waiver authority for funding this and other UN entities. Given the critical U.S. interests in providing waiver authority and funding to the World Heritage program, given that this Committee already voted to provide that funding, and given that the Israeli Government, who should be most concerned about this issue, supports a narrow waiver for World Heritage funds, what is the administration able to do to show how critical this waiver is?

—What can you do to educate Members of Congress on the critical economic impact for 14 States that are at stake if World Heritage funding is denied once again for no good reason?

Answer. As a founding member and the driving force behind the World Heritage Convention of 1972, the United States remains committed to advancing the Convention's ideals to preserve our world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage. Partnering with our colleagues in the U.S. Department of Interior, the State Department strongly advocates for promoting and preserving our twenty-one inscribed U.S. World Heritage sites, and works diligently to advance vital U.S. economic and cultural interests by guiding the nomination process for inscribing new U.S. sites.

As you mention, the World Heritage Committee will consider the inscription of Poverty Point State Historic Site in Louisiana during its 38th Meeting this June in Doha, Qatar. We will enthusiastically champion this nomination in Doha, and will send a delegation of U.S. cultural heritage policy and technical experts to support the inscription efforts on behalf of Poverty Point. We believe the administration's unwavering commitment to full engagement at UNESCO and our respected leadership on World Heritage issues will reinforce the compelling case for inscription of Poverty Point in 2014, and for the San Antonio Franciscan Missions nomination to be considered by the World Heritage Committee in 2015.

As you rightly point out, designation as a World Heritage site can be a significant driver of international recognition, tourism, community pride, economic development, and long-term conservation planning and resources. For all these reasons, funding for the World Heritage program is, and will remain, an important priority for the United States.

Withholding our assessed contributions to UNESCO led to the loss of our vote in UNESCO's General Conference in 2013. More generally, withholding our support to UNESCO hampers our ability to advance U.S. interests in World Heritage, to sustain Holocaust education as a means to combat anti-Semitism and prevent future atrocities, and to promote freedom of expression, including for the press, and safety for journalists globally. This administration seeks a national interest waiver to allow the discretion necessary to continue to provide contributions that enable us to maintain our vote and influence within the UN and UN specialized agencies, including UNESCO. Through the waiver, the administration aims to empower the United States to determine how and when we engage in multilateral organizations, and to advance the interests of the United States and its closest partners across the full spectrum of policy goals.

Experts from the State Department are available to brief you and other Members of Congress in more detail on our important work at UNESCO and on the World Heritage program should you have more questions. I appreciate your ongoing efforts to highlight the importance of U.S. leadership at UNESCO and to advance our national interests through World Heritage recognition of U.S. sites with outstanding universal value for all of human kind.

Question. The PEPFAR Stewardship and Oversight Act, a bill which reauthorizes the 10 percent set aside for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), became law last December. This OVC money represents a huge part of the international investment—about \$350 million per year—for orphans and vulnerable children, and supports efforts to keep these children in school, reduce barriers to healthcare and nutrition, and improve protection from abuse and neglect. However, after extensive conversations with PEPFAR staff at the Department of State, I was shocked to learn that none of this \$350 million in OVC funds is spent on programs that provide alternative family care for those children who are unable to remain with their biological family. Simply put, the largest U.S. Government-funded programming for double orphans does nothing to help these children to no longer be orphans! In fact, the number of worldwide

orphans is increasing. When PEPFAR was first passed in 2003, there were an estimated 15 million children orphaned by AIDS. Today there are 17 million. I originally intended to file an amendment to S.1545 that would have fixed this ironic inadequacy with the OVC program, but out of deference to Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker and in consideration of the overall goals of PEPFAR, I set aside my amendment and gave consent for the bill to move for final passage. I'd like to take the opportunity here to ask for your input on how Congress might work together with the State Department to improve the OVC Set Aside.

—Are you aware that the OVC set aside in PEPFAR does not focus on finding permanent families for children, other than family preservation efforts?

—What can be done to ensure that programs funded under PEPFAR for orphans and vulnerable children through the 10 percent Set-Aside give priority to children who are living outside of family care and are aimed at finding permanent placements for children through family reunification and kinship, domestic or international adoption?

Answer. PEPFAR is strongly focused on both *finding* families for children and on *maintaining* children in permanent families.

WHY PEPFAR FOCUSES ON FAMILY PRESERVATION

As stated in the Action Plan for Children in Adversity, a whole-of-government strategic guidance on international assistance for children, efforts for Objective 2: Putting Family Care First “should primarily be directed to enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his/her parents or, when appropriate, other close family members. Strengthening families is a first priority.” (p.9) Stable, caring families and communities and strong child welfare systems are the best defenses against the effects of HIV/AIDS in the lives of children.

While the majority of children affected by AIDS are not outside of families or “parentless,” this does not mean that very large numbers are not vulnerable as a result of AIDS.

The most effective approach to addressing the extreme vulnerability that children face in the epidemic is to ensure that the parents and caregivers who are left and are caring for children stay strong and healthy and have the resources and skills to keep the children in their care safe and thriving.

HOW PEPFAR PUTS FAMILY CARE FIRST

PEPFAR Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programs work to put family care first by engaging in activities aimed at preventing separation and keeping children in families, and where necessary, reintegrating children into family care. These are all core principles of APCA Objective 2.

Moreover, PEPFAR invests in evidence-based programming that dramatically increases a vulnerable family's ability to care for children. Household economic strengthening prevents the separation of children from families due to the economic burden of HIV. PEPFAR OVC programs have supported 10,000 savings groups in 15 countries. As a result, approximately 1,000,000 children affected by AIDS are living in families with improved economic stability. Such programs are enhanced by PEPFAR OVC programs that link parents to social protection efforts such as cash transfers, further increasing their ability to provide for children in their care.

PEPFAR SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF FAMILY CARE

While family preservation remains at the core of PEPFAR's work, these efforts are intertwined with ensuring children outside of family care (COFC) are also supported as a priority within PEPFAR OVC programs.

For example, in South Africa, PEPFAR, in partnership with the government has supported legislation and policies that encourage permanent family placement and in-country adoption specifically. The results of these efforts include a revised National Adoption Policy, which is enhanced by PEPFAR supported adoption education and an “Adopt RSA Kids” Web site, as well as an updated National Action & Monitoring Plan for Children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. In Mozambique, PEPFAR is supporting the placement of at least 6,000 vulnerable children deprived of parental care into families. These efforts will be supported by the development of a simplified guardianship information system to regulate placement of children and to ensure that a safe and monitored care placement.

In addition, in Tanzania, an assessment of children living on the street and children within key and other vulnerable populations (e.g. sex workers and trafficked children) is planned for early 2015. Following on this assessment, implementing non-governmental organization (NGO) partners will strengthen linkages to health, temporary shelter, family placement/reintegration and other services for children

living on the street or without reliable shelter and adult care. In Uganda and Ethiopia the PEPFAR supported organization Retrak works with street children by helping them to return to family (or find new families), and by ensuring those families have the follow up support (parental skills, economic opportunities) to ensure children can stay there.

On a global level PEPFAR supports the development and dissemination of guidance and tools to build capacity in permanency solutions. For example, PEPFAR financially supported USAID's Center for Excellence on Children in Adversity in the development of a methodology for surveillance of children living outside of family care and contributed to the Evidence Summit on Children Outside of Family Care. PEPFAR is also a long-term supporter of the Better Care Network which disseminates state of the art evidence, tools and technical assistance aimed at promoting permanency solutions for children globally.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

The best and most sustainable way to support children outside of family care is to support the child welfare systems that can ensure they are safe and placed in permanent family care. As stated in the APCA under Objective 4: "Effective and well-functioning child welfare and protection systems are vital to a nation's social and economic progress, . . . Protection services prevent and respond to child abuse, both within and outside the home, and . . . provide appropriate care for children separated from their families of origin."

Strengthening child welfare and protection systems is a central focus of PEPFAR's OVC programming, and PEPFAR has spearheaded such efforts globally. PEPFAR works with governments to promote robust child welfare systems strengthening, and enhanced social welfare workforce capacity to prevent and respond to child abuse. PEPFAR partners work together to deliver high-quality child welfare and protection services that reduce vulnerability, ensure access to essential services—including those for health and HIV—prevent and respond to violence against children, and preserve family structures in AIDS-affected communities. Important improvements in child welfare systems are underway in many countries, including social protection through child grants, deinstitutionalization, and foster care. Addressing these needs requires strong child welfare systems and intentional workforce strengthening that facilitates access to services across sectors for vulnerable children in and outside of families.

Question. The scale of the Syria crisis continues to increase exponentially. Nine million Syrians, approaching half of the country's pre-war population, have fled their homes. Six and one-half million people are internally displaced and nearly 2.5 million have sought refuge in neighboring countries. The suffering of Syrian civilians is alarming and overwhelming, with women and children disproportionately vulnerable to the violence and the effects of the war. Before the conflict, Syria was a middle-income country with low child mortality rates. Now, deadly diseases such as measles and meningitis are on the rise and vaccine programs in Syria have collapsed. Even polio, eradicated in Syria almost 20 years ago, is now being carried by up to 80,000 children across the country—a figure so high that medical experts have raised concerns about a potential international spread of the virus. Despite the continued expansion of humanitarian need, the President's fiscal year 2015 budget proposal requests \$1.6 billion less in funding for the International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts than Congress provided in the fiscal year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

—How can the administration's proposed budget ensure that the U.S. continues to provide its fair share of contributions to respond to the Syria crisis in light of growing humanitarian needs?

—What is the U.S. Government doing to provide immediate access to child-focused health services in Syria to ensure that these children do not only survive preventable and treatable illnesses, but are also thriving in the arms of a permanent caregiver?

Answer. The U.S. Government is the single-largest donor of humanitarian assistance for those affected by the Syria crisis, providing more than \$1.7 billion in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis—nearly \$878 million to support those inside Syria, and nearly \$862 million to support refugees fleeing from Syria and host communities in neighboring countries. Support inside Syria goes through trusted international and non-governmental organizations.

In the fiscal year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations bill, Congress generously provided \$2.2 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding for humanitarian programs. This funding is critical to address growing humanitarian needs worldwide, including the Syria crisis, where the combined UN humanitarian appeal

for Syria has nearly doubled over the last year and represents approximately half of the 2014 total worldwide humanitarian need of \$12.9 billion. Given the significant ongoing humanitarian needs inside Syria and across the region, the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development plan to carry over funding from fiscal year 2014 into fiscal year 2015 to help address the substantial needs of the projected 11 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria, 5 million refugees from Syria in the region, about half of whom are children under 18 years of age, and communities in refugee-hosting countries that are enduring strains on basic infrastructure and health and educational systems.

U.S. health assistance inside Syria has provided training for Syrian medical workers, direct healthcare services, supplies for hospitals and clinics and support for polio vaccination campaigns. The United States is supporting 298 hospitals, health clinics, and mobile medical units across Syria, which have treated more than 1.9 million Syrian patients and performed nearly 265,000 surgeries. These patients include innocent children caught in the crossfire as well as basic primary healthcare and services for those who become ill. The United States is also supporting the childhood vaccination efforts led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, who are working to vaccinate 22 million children across the region. The WHO and UNICEF have consistently reached over 2.5 million children in each of the last four vaccination campaigns inside Syria. Additionally, the United States supports disease surveillance and vaccination campaigns as part of its emergency primary healthcare programs throughout Syria. U.S. funding to the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees inside Syria has supported UNHCR's efforts to provide \$4.6 million worth of medicine to hospitals across Syria.

In addition, U.S. funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been critical to ensuring continued care for the more than 540,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, about one-third of whom are children and over half of whom are displaced. Although only 14 of UNRWA's 23 health centers remain operational due to ongoing conflict and access constraints, UNRWA has deployed nine mobile health points to reach Palestinians refugees in areas of displacement inside Syria.

In addition to healthcare, the U.S. Government is helping children, mothers, fathers, and caretakers cope with psychosocial stress. We are also helping to provide appropriate protective care for their children and training community members in basic social work and case management skills so they may identify children at risk and connect them to available support. UNRWA is making efforts to address the needs of the more than 67,000 children enrolled in its schools by increasing the number of psychosocial counselors working across its network of schools and providing additional support to out-of-school children.

U.S. support to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) helps improve the supply of potable water and sanitation inside Syria, benefiting and protecting vulnerable children. In 2013, 20 million people in Syria benefited from ICRC's improvements to water and sanitation facilities, ten million people—in all 14 governorates—benefited from emergency repairs to water system damaged by fighting, 3.1 million people benefited from a waste and pesticides program in Aleppo and Idlib governorates, and 810,000 benefited from water delivered by truck.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. Since 1979, the Foreign Operations appropriations bill has prohibited the use of funds to provide abortion services for Peace Corps volunteers and trainees, without exception. Under this rider, official policy requires that volunteers pay out of pocket for abortion care even in cases of rape, incest, and where a woman's life would be endangered by carrying the pregnancy to term. This is at odds with all other Federal employees who do receive coverage for these exceptions, and I have long supported healthcare parity for the women volunteers who are carrying out our diplomatic and humanitarian interests overseas. I appreciate that in the fiscal year 2015 budget, the administration has allowed for the healthcare parity for Peace Corps volunteers, and has allowed for abortion coverage for volunteers in cases of rape, incest, and life endangerment. Can you comment on the importance of providing this health equity to our volunteers?

Answer. The Department of State defers to the Peace Corps on this matter as it is not within the State Department's purview.

Question. At least 222 million women in the developing world would like to prevent or delay pregnancy but lack access to safe, effective contraception, and each year an estimated 287,000 women still die from pregnancy related causes. Can you talk about where you see opportunities for U.S. leadership to continue to make

progress on expanding access to family planning and reproductive health information and services?

Answer. With the help of Congress, the United States continues to be the world's largest bilateral donor for international family planning. This further demonstrates the U.S. Government's firm commitment to helping men and women across the globe meet their reproductive health needs. Enabling an individual or couple to decide whether, when, and how often to have children is vital to safe motherhood, healthy families, and prosperous communities. Family planning can reduce the economic burden on poor families and allow women more time to work outside the home, which leads to increased family income. These economic benefits of family planning contribute directly to the U.S. Government goal of ending extreme poverty in two decades. Research clearly shows that voluntary family planning programs not only improve health, reduce poverty, and empower women, but also save lives. When women bear children too early, too late, or too close together, there are negative impacts on their health and their children's health. USAID-supported research shows that family planning could prevent up to 30 percent of the estimated 287,000 maternal deaths that occur every year, by enabling women to delay their first pregnancy and space later pregnancies at the safest intervals. And if all babies were born 3 years apart, the lives of 1.6 million children under the age of 5 would be saved each year.

The U.S. Government will continue to show leadership on this issue in multilateral fora such as the UN Commission on Population and Development, the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and the UN Human Rights Council. We persistently make the argument at these venues and elsewhere that reproductive health services, especially voluntary family planning, are essential to promote sustainable economic development, advance gender equality, and contribute to the U.S. Government's goals of Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths and Creating an AIDS-free Generation.

Through USAID, the U.S. Government advances and supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs in more than 45 countries around the globe. As a core partner in the Family Planning 2020 Initiative, USAID is committed to working with the global community to reach an additional 120 million women and girls with family planning information, commodities, and services by 2020. These services empower individuals to choose the timing and spacing of their pregnancies, bear children during their healthiest years, prevent unintended pregnancies, and nurture healthier families and communities.

Additionally, the U.S. Government actively supports the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and many other development and humanitarian organizations to respond to the challenges of providing access to reproductive health services in crisis settings. This includes training staff, offering community education, establishing client follow-up, providing a variety of family planning methods, and maintaining a contraceptive supply chain system. Access to these life-saving interventions is linked to recovery from humanitarian and post-conflict situations, not just for women and girls, but also for their communities.

Furthermore, as we focus on the ongoing 20 year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Program of Action, as well as the upcoming 20 year review of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the review of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, the U.S. Government will continue to work toward advancing these goals. Improving the health and well-being of all individuals, especially women and children, promotes political and economic stability and social and economic progress. We will seek every opportunity to promote the participation of all stakeholders as we discuss the appropriate inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including family planning, in the Post-2015 Development Agenda and into our development and poverty reduction plans and policies.

Question. Internet freedom is under assault around the globe. In Russia, the government has blocked tens of thousands of dissident Web sites. In Ukraine, sites have been attacked. In Iran, 16 Internet activists were arrested in December, and online blogs and news outlets are frequently subject to closure. In China, bloggers remain extremely concerned by a recent government crackdown on Internet discourse. We are also witnessing challenges to Internet freedom emerging in countries as wide-ranging as Pakistan, Vietnam and Turkey.

Are you concerned about the state of Internet freedom worldwide and what do you believe the State Department and the U.S. Government can do to more effectively promote an open Internet?

Answer. We are very concerned about the state of Internet freedom worldwide, and are committed to promoting the human rights of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association just as we do offline. As President Obama said, "We will

fight hard to make sure that the Internet remains the open forum for everybody—from those who are expressing an idea to those who want to start a business.”

The State Department seeks to promote, protect, and advance Internet freedom through bilateral and multilateral engagement, foreign assistance programming, and partnerships with civil society and the private sector.

Bilaterally, we raise Internet freedom regularly in human rights and economic discussions with a wide range of countries, from China and Vietnam, to Turkey. We also work to advance human rights online through multilateral coordination efforts, such as the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC), a group of 22 governments spanning Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East, that is committed to collaborating with each other, as well as with civil society and the private sector, to advance Internet freedom. By strengthening partnerships with like-minded governments we empower them to be regional leaders on Internet freedom.

We look forward to the April 28–29 Freedom Online Coalition conference in Estonia, where we will continue to work with partners to advance a free and secure Internet, to ensure that the same rights that people have offline are also protected online, and that protection of these rights is governed by rule of law. We also work through the Internet Governance Forum, UN processes, and other working groups to preserve the multi-stakeholder character of the Internet.

Programming is a vital tool to protect people and organizations at risk, provide capacity to safely communicate, push for reform of repressive policies, and improve technologies. With the support of Congress, we have issued grants to increase open access to the Internet for people in closed societies, support digital activists, counter censorship and repression, create and leverage technological innovations, and provide training, research, and advocacy.

Our embassies advocate on behalf of imprisoned and arrested online activists. We engage daily with the civil society actors who shape the future of the Internet in their countries.

We keep a consistent dialogue with the private sector on issues of Internet freedom. We are encouraged by corporations that make meaningful and principled commitments to respect human rights, including through initiatives such as the Global Network Initiative (GNI). This is a multi-stakeholder group that brings together IT companies, civil society organizations, investors, and academics to help corporations develop effective, practical responses to human rights challenges that arise while interacting with governments around the world.

In sum, Internet freedom is a major policy priority, and we look forward to working with subcommittee members to advance Internet freedom worldwide.

Question. As you know, Saturday, March 8 was International Women’s Day. In its honor, I introduced a resolution to the Senate recognizing that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to generate economic growth, sustainable democracy, and inclusive security, and honoring the women in the United States and around the world who have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights. We have made a lot of progress, but there is clearly still work to further the health, rights and empowerment of women worldwide. Women lag far behind men in access to land, credit and decent jobs, even though a growing body of research shows that enhancing women’s economic options boosts national economies. How can the role of women in the global economy be elevated and sustained, and how can we ensure the U.S. remains a leader on women’s economic empowerment issues?

Answer. The Department of State has made economic empowerment a centerpiece of American foreign policy, and recognizes the central role of women’s economic participation. As I said last year, “The United States believes gender equality is critical to our shared goals of prosperity, stability, and peace, and [that is] why investing in women and girls worldwide is critical to advancing U.S. foreign policy.” In order to achieve these goals, we need to encourage, and harness the untapped talent and productivity of women across the globe. These efforts also highlight the role of the U.S. as a leader on women’s economic empowerment issues globally.

The Department is committed to elevating the role of women in the global economy through comprehensive efforts across regional and functional bureaus at the Department, and at posts worldwide. The Department’s efforts are structured to build upon our significant progress in integrating the importance of women’s economic empowerment into our foreign policy agenda. We do this by analyzing the areas where women face additional barriers to economic participation and empowerment, and addressing them. These efforts to both identify gaps and create mechanisms to address those gaps are focused in four areas: (1) access to markets; (2) access to capital/assets; (3) access to skills, capacity building and health; and (4) women’s leadership, voice and agency.

The Department works in numerous ways to advance the economic status of women, and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) leads and coordinates these efforts across the Department. One key focus is to support and strengthen women's entrepreneurship initiatives and networks. The United States has created and expanded regional programs to provide women business owners, entrepreneurs, and leaders with training, skills, networks, and other resources needed to expand their businesses and increase potential. There are several efforts across the globe, including for example, the Africa Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) and Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas (WEAmericas).

A second is to integrate women's economic participation into major regional and international economic fora, including the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, Association of South East Asian Nations, Lower Mekong Initiative, Broader Middle East and Northern Africa Initiative, the Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Summit of the Americas, the Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas Initiative, Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan (RECCA), the G-20 and the Equal Futures Partnership. Economic, trade, and finance ministers have reacted favorably and have continued to express interest in engaging on this topic. These meetings recognize the barriers women face in fully contributing to the economy and encourage governments and the private sector to implement policies and reforms, collect better data, and share best practices that will enable women to play a more active role in the economic sphere.

Lastly, the Department utilizes public private partnerships to address barriers to women's economic participation. Current and past partnerships include partnerships with the private sector, universities, and international institutions. These partnerships have focused on support for specific initiatives, research, and data collection and analysis.

Question. In your testimony, you mentioned the role the State Department is already playing on economic diplomacy and creating opportunities for American business overseas. I know Secretary Clinton focused on business advocacy abroad as well. I've heard first hand from businesses in my home State of New Hampshire the important role the State Department can play for our businesses abroad in advocating for their interests. Do you believe this budget provides you the resources necessary to make U.S. business advocacy a priority overseas?

Answer. The Department of State works to advance the interests of the United States overseas, including our economic interests. By supporting U.S. businesses overseas—from knocking down trade barriers and protecting intellectual property rights to direct advocacy for specific U.S. firms seeking contracts with foreign governments—we expand our influence while creating jobs here at home. Business advocacy is already a priority for the Department, both in Washington and at our overseas posts. In fiscal year 2013 the Department recorded 971 “success stories,” defined as an export deal achieved, dispute resolved, or foreign policy changed through Department advocacy. Additional resources would, of course, allow us to do more and to generate more wins for American businesses. However, recognizing the current austere budget environment we face, we will continue to work with business and with our partner agencies, including the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, to generate the biggest return possible for the dollars we invest in supporting U.S. business overseas.

Question. As you are aware, last year the State Department faced a growing backlog of immigration visa applications from Afghans who, at tremendous risk to their own lives and to the lives of their family members, assisted the United States and NATO as translators in Afghanistan. What is the status of the implementation of the new Iraqi and Afghan SIV procedures and provisions under the 2014 NDAA, and has the backlog been sufficiently addressed?

Answer. The State Department and the other U.S. Government departments and agencies involved in the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) process have the highest respect for the men and women who have taken enormous risks while helping our military and civilian personnel. We are committed to helping those who—at great personal risk—have helped us. Over the past year, we improved processing times, expanded outreach to current and former employees who may be eligible, and issued more SIVs in Afghanistan (and in Iraq) than in any previous year.

In the first half of fiscal year 2014, we have issued more SIVs to Afghans and their dependents than in all of fiscal year 2013 and have more than doubled the total number of Afghan principal applicants issued in fiscal year 2013 (651). In fiscal year 2014, through April 8, we have issued 3,617 SIVs to Afghans and their dependents; 1,320 SIVs of which were issued to Afghan principal applicants. All approvable Iraqi principal applicants were issued prior to the program's temporary end on September 30, 2013. In fiscal year 2014, as of April 8, we have issued an

additional 912 SIVs to Iraqis and their dependents, with 218 of these SIVs to Iraqi principal applicants. The relatively low number of issuances to date in fiscal year 2014 for Iraqis reflects the success of the surge at the end of fiscal year 2013.

We have done this while maintaining the highest standards of security for the SIV program. We have a responsibility to the American people to ensure all those who enter the United States, including SIV recipients, do not pose a threat.

Provisions contained in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) fiscal year 2014 have allowed us to streamline some SIV procedures. Under this legislation, a credible sworn statement depicting dangerous country conditions, together with official evidence of such country conditions from the U.S. Government, should be considered in determining whether an applicant has experienced or is experiencing an ongoing serious threat; therefore, the Embassy Kabul COM Committee no longer assesses the serious threat qualifier for each individual SIV applicant. Instead, the SIV Unit Manager, designated as Embassy Kabul's SIV Coordinator, now has authority to grant COM approval on SIV applications that clearly meet the legal requirements. As of March, the Embassy Kabul COM Committee reviews only those cases recommended for denial.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) employees who worked for NATO countries do not qualify for the SIV programs under section 1244 of the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2008, as amended, and section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended. Among the requirements to qualify for these programs is that the applicant must have "provided faithful and valuable service to the United States Government" while "employed by or on behalf of the United States Government." ISAF employees may qualify for the SIV program under section 1059 of the NDAA fiscal year 2006. This program's criteria includes "having worked directly with United States Armed Forces, or under Chief of Mission authority, as a translator or interpreter for a period of at least 12 months" and, if the work was with a U.S. Armed Forces unit, having "supported" that unit. As such, an ISAF employee who can establish 1 year of qualifying work which was directly with and supporting a U.S. Armed Forces unit as a translator or interpreter could qualify under the section 1059 SIV program.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM

Question. What actions has the administration taken to secure the release of Pastor Saeed Abedini?

Answer. The U.S. Government is dedicated to the return of U.S.-Iranian dual national Saeed Abedini. The President, the Secretary, and U/S Sherman have raised Mr. Abedini's case directly with the Iranian Government. We have made clear that we are calling on Iran to release Mr. Abedini so he can be reunited with his family. At our request, the Swiss Government, in its role as our protecting power, has also continued to raise Mr. Abedini's case on our behalf, as have other countries that we have asked to press Iran to cooperate on these cases.

The United States has publicly called for Mr. Abedini's release at the UN Human Rights Council, and has played a leading role in lobbying the UN Human Rights Council to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for human rights in Iran, a useful mechanism for addressing in international fora our human rights concerns with Iran, including violations of religious freedom. We will continue to pursue all available options until he returns home safely.

Question. Do you have an update on [Saeed Abedini's] health and status?

Answer. According to media reports, Saeed Abedini was transferred to Dey Hospital on March 3, 2014, and his father has been permitted to visit him in the hospital. The Department of State remains in close contact with his family regarding his status, but due to Privacy Act considerations we cannot share any additional information.

Question. What is the status of the non-governmental organization (NGO) trial in Cairo that has politically ensnared the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, among other organizations? Do you have any confidence that the Egyptian Government will resolve this issue prior to the holding of presidential elections?

Answer. We continue to press the Egyptian Government at high levels for redress of the NGO trial verdict, including pardons for all Egyptian and international staff. We understand that Egypt has not pursued Interpol measures since the convictions in June 2013 (notices or extradition requests), and they have assured us they would not. Our understanding is that a general amnesty would require legislation; currently, Egypt has no parliament and will not have one until after the parliamentary

elections tentatively scheduled for this fall. We will continue to raise the issue at high levels with the interim government and with future elected governments.

Question. Can you provide assurances to the Subcommittee that proposed framework for rebidding the State Department's Global Aviation Services Contract in multiple components will maintain the high standards of safety and efficiency of the current contract?

Does the State Department estimate that higher costs are associated with rebidding the contract in multiple components?

Answer. When the aviation support contract was last competed in 2004/2005, the Department solicited industry input. Firms expressed an interest in the Department breaking up its aviation requirements and being able to bid on separate functions. However, the Department did not have time then to consider such a division.

Over a year ago, in January 2013, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) sponsored an Industry Best Practice and Vendor Identification Conference to identify potential business sources with the resources, capabilities, and experience to successfully deliver requisite services to sustain the Department's Aviation Fleet.

Market research continued that spring, and all told over 200 companies participated, with 140 firms meeting with Department representatives. These firms ranged from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses. The Department's research also evaluated whether any of the needed services could be provided by small businesses, including HubZone, Service Disabled Veterans, and Woman-owned small businesses.

This market research enabled the INL program staff to identify more clearly which functions could be broken out for small business and which ones should be procured using unrestricted acquisition methods, including interoperability between all functional areas.

This decision on how to divide the program areas into seven separate solicitations—four for small business set-aside and three for unrestricted competition—was made only after a thorough review of the extensive market research, and based on INL's more than 20 years of professional expertise on the feasibility of the successful performance of this INL mission using the combinations of breakout and unrestricted awards that they had identified.

In developing this acquisition plan, the safety, reliability, and effectiveness of the aviation program have been paramount considerations. We are aware of the importance of this program and its impact on the safety and wellbeing of not only State Department personnel, but all those who rely upon us for air transportation. Our acquisition process is designed to ensure that we continue to provide aviation services at the same high level of safety and professionalism we have always maintained.

We believe that the approach we are taking has the potential to save the U.S. Government money due to increased competition and reduced sub-contractor overhead charges. However, it is not possible to accurately predict the cost of the future contract arrangement compared to historical costs since this entails new solicitations that differ in terms of contract requirements, and we do not know what industry's final cost proposals will be. We believe that this approach will increase competition and will also allow us to modernize our operations. We identified modern industry practices and the most cost effective methods of providing our requirements in each functional area.

Overall, we believe that we have considered the risks and benefits of our contracting approach for this recompet, and that our contracting plan will provide needed aviation services safely and efficiently.

Question. What is the status of Dr. Shakeel Afridi, and is his release a talking point in bilateral relations?

Answer. Dr. Afridi was convicted of aiding the banned militant group Lashkar-e-Islam in May 2012, though his role in trying to locate Osama bin Laden is believed to be the reason he remains in jail. He is currently in prison in Peshawar, Pakistan. In March 2013, his sentence was reduced from 33 years to 22 years. The Department believes Dr. Afridi's treatment is both unjust and unwarranted. Senior U.S. officials regularly and consistently raise his case with senior officials in Pakistan's Government, encouraging them to resolve his case and free him, given that bringing Osama bin Laden to justice was clearly in the interests of both the United States and Pakistan.

Question. Bolstering the Baltic Air Policing Mission was an important step to reassure Russia's NATO neighbors that the United States takes their security concerns seriously. What additional steps can we take to provide security guarantees to Russia's neighbors both NATO and non-NATO, including Georgia and Moldova?

Answer. The United States and NATO have already taken a number of steps to reassure NATO Allies and partners in light of the Ukraine crisis. In addition to the

augmentation of NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission, these actions have included expanded U.S. air exercises coordinated by the U.S. Aviation Detachment in Poland, maritime training in the Black Sea among the U.S. and Black Sea Allies Romania and Bulgaria, and the deployment of NATO AWACS over Poland and Romania to monitor Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian air space. NATO's Supreme Allied Command Europe will be presenting a further package of air, land and sea reassurance measures in the coming weeks, and we expect Allies to fully contribute to this mission.

In addition, at the April NATO Foreign Ministerial, Foreign Ministers agreed to increase practical cooperation with three of NATO's Eastern Partners: Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. All three asked for increased engagement with NATO during recent high-level meetings.

The United States has worked in particular to improve Moldova's border security by expanding a Defense Threat Reduction Agency program. Under the program, the United States will give an additional \$10 million this year for equipment and training to Moldova's Border Police and Customs Service. The equipment will improve the overall capacity of Moldova's border guards and help protect against the smuggling of illicit nuclear/radiological materials. The United States has also launched a Strategic Dialogue with Moldova to enhance the security dialogue between our countries.

NATO also works with Georgia in its efforts to build strong, modern, and capable armed forces. Years of participation in NATO operations have made the Georgian forces tough, skilled, and largely interoperable with Allied forces. NATO is committed to a continued program of close cooperation with Georgia via the NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) and the activities laid out in its Annual National Program. The United States offers bilateral security assistance and military engagement with Georgia to support its defense reforms, train and equip Georgian troops for participation in ISAF operations, and advance Georgia's NATO interoperability. Since the agreement between our two presidents in January 2012 to take steps to advance Georgian military modernization, reform, and self-defense capabilities, the U.S. European Command has been working closely with Georgia's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces to implement these new areas of cooperation. We are continuing to review implementation of this enhanced defense cooperation and identify opportunities to advance our strong security partnership.

Question. What are the Department of State's long-term plans for operations out of Gaziantep, Turkey?

Answer. As you know, the Syria Transition Assistance Response Team (START) is an interagency team comprised of offices and bureaus from State and USAID responsible for planning and delivery of non-lethal and humanitarian assistance. It works with international organizations, NGOs, the Government of Turkey, and the Syrian opposition in order to ensure an effective and efficient response to Syria's needs. START works from our Consulates in Adana and Istanbul and our Embassy in Ankara.

With regard to START members' presence in Gaziantep, we constantly reassess plans based on developments on the ground. Currently, the planned U.S. presence in Gaziantep is intended to be limited and geographically close to Syria in order to facilitate coordination and delivery of assistance to the Syrian opposition and Syrian people.

Question. What are the priorities of the State Department on foreign assistance to the Great Lakes Region?

Answer. Our foreign priorities for the Great Lakes region are focused on resolving the root causes of conflict and instability which means focusing first and foremost on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Our DRC priorities include consolidating peace and security in the country's east, improving governance through credible elections, and professionalizing and training Congo's security forces to protect its territory and citizens.

The late 2013 defeat of the M23 rebel group in North Kivu and gains made against other rebel forces in eastern Congo in early 2014 provide an unforeseen opportunity for achieving sustainable stability in the DRC. The next 1-to-3 years could be decisive. The DRC is gearing up for local elections, its first since independence in 1960, and provincial and national elections before the end of 2016. Following the seriously flawed 2011 election, it is imperative that these next elections are peaceful and credible, and further the democratization of the country. Achieving this goal will require substantial donor assistance, including in the early stages of election planning.

Another foreign assistance priority in the region is Burundi, where we are increasingly concerned about shrinking political space and the potential for political violence. USAID and the Department have identified an additional \$7.52 million in

immediate resources intended to support free and fair elections in Burundi scheduled for May 2015.

Question. What actions are the State Department, USAID, or other U.S. agencies taking to assist the DRC in conducting successful elections? Is there adequate funding in the fiscal year 2015 budget request for this purpose?

Answer. The DRC Government currently estimates the cost of 2014–16 elections at more than \$950 million, with \$388 million needed for local elections next year. The DRC electoral commission hopes the government will provide 80 percent of funds needed to support elections, with the remaining 20 percent coming from donors. USAID has set aside \$700,000 in fiscal year 2013 funds to support elections programming. Allocations for fiscal year 2014 resources are not yet finalized. We will continue to work with others in the international donor community to support DRC elections.

The United States also played a key role in revising the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) to enable the mission to provide much-needed logistical support for elections. MONUSCO is the only entity in the country with the capacity to fly ballot boxes around and provide other heavy-lift types of support. MONUSCO's mandate requires the DRC Government to adopt an electoral cycle roadmap and budget before the mission can provide support.

Lastly, we are actively and continuously engaging the DRC Government on the need for inclusive, transparent elections according to the current constitution.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARK KIRK

Question. Do you agree that other than by exercising the existing national security waiver authority provided in the statute, the President may not suspend, lift or override the requirement to impose sanctions under Section 1245 of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2012 (Public Law 122–78) without congressional legislative action to suspend, amend or repeal the statute?

Answer. On January 20, 2014, the administration issued a set of waivers of certain sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action between the P5 + 1 and Iran. These included a waiver of section 1245(d)(5) of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2012 (NDAA). In accordance with the law, the Secretary determined that this waiver was in the national security interest of the United States with respect to China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Turkey, and certified these jurisdictions faced exceptional circumstances preventing them from reducing significantly their purchases of petroleum and petroleum products from Iran. Subsequently, on March 10, 2014, the Secretary executed a waiver under NDAA section 1245(d)(5) for Oman. These actions enable the current purchasers of Iranian crude oil (China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Taiwan) to maintain their current average purchase levels for the 6-month period of the Joint Plan of Action and facilitates the repatriation in installments of \$4.2 billion to Iran of funds held in restricted accounts overseas over the 6-month period.

Question. Do you believe the final nuclear agreement with Iran should be considered a Treaty and be subject to ratification by the Senate—why or why not?

Answer. As we are still in the process of negotiating a comprehensive solution to address concerns with Iran's nuclear program, I can't comment on the form any such solution will take. However, Congress has been an important partner in this process, and we will continue to seek Congress' support as we pursue a comprehensive solution.

Question. If an acceptable nuclear agreement with Iran was reached in Vienna, would Iran's financial system, including the Central Bank of Iran, still be a concern for money laundering and terror finance?

Answer. We have not reached a comprehensive solution with Iran. We cannot speculate, therefore, on what concerns we may or may not have with Iran in a hypothetical future scenario. We are committed to continuing to utilize our various authorities to enforce those sanctions that remain in place in furtherance of our policies on both Iran's nuclear program, as well as a range of other illicit conduct, even during the Joint Plan of Action period.

Question. Do you consider the current Government of Iran to be legitimate?

Answer. We recognize the Government of Iran. This does not mean that we do not have concerns with the activities of the Iranian Government. For example, we remain concerned about Iran's nuclear program, its sponsorship of terrorism, destabilizing regional activities, and violations of human rights. We have also maintained our concerns about the electoral process in Iran. Observers have noted that polling falls short of international standards for free and fair elections, including the reported intimidation of activists and journalists, restrictions on freedom of expres-

sion, and the disqualification of a large number of candidates, including all female candidates, for elected office by the Guardian Council, which is an unelected and unaccountable body. That said, we congratulated the Iranian people last year for participating in the political process and demonstrating the courage to make their voices heard. The Iranian people were determined to act to shape their future. As a consequence, Iran's president was overwhelmingly elected by the Iranian people.

Question. April 24, 2014 marks the 99th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, the campaign of mass murder of 1.5 million Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire from 1915–1923. There are now only a few known living survivors of the Armenian Genocide, including 107-year-old Helen Paloian of Chicago, who lost her parents and two of her brothers.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, will the U.S. finally honor the few surviving victims like Helen Paloian and officially recognize the Armenian Genocide?

Answer. The administration has commemorated the Meds Yaghem, and continues to acknowledge as a historical fact that 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. The administration supports diplomatic efforts that support the President's call for "a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts." We will continue to support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their shared history.

Question. According to the 2013 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) report on Turkey: "[T]he Turkish Government still controls access and use of various religious sites such as the Greek Orthodox Sümela Orthodox Monastery in Trabzon, the 1,000-year-old Akdamar Armenian Orthodox church on Lake Van, and the Syriac Mor Petrus and Mor Paulus Church in the eastern province of Adiyaman." There were also reports of vandalism and violence against Christians, such as attacks against three Christian churches over Easter Week in May 2013.

What efforts has the U.S. Government undertaken to urge Turkey to return the remaining Christian properties to their rightful owners? Has the State Department communicated their concern to Turkish authorities about attacks against Christians and their places of worship?

Answer. We recognize religious minority groups continue to face challenges in Turkey. We are encouraged by concrete steps the Government of Turkey has taken over the past year to return properties to religious communities, including the return of the Mor Gabriel Monastery and 47 acres of property surrounding Halki Seminary. The State Department regularly engages at all levels with Turkish officials regarding the importance of religious freedom, including the reopening of Halki Seminary, legal reforms aimed at lifting restrictions on religious groups, property restitution, and specific cases of religious discrimination. Furthermore, we strongly condemn violence toward all religious minorities in the strongest terms, and urge Turkish authorities to fully pursue investigations and bring perpetrators to justice. We continue to encourage the Government of Turkey to follow through on the return of religious minority properties and to take additional steps to promote religious freedom, such as allowing more religious communities to own property, register their places of worship, and train their clergy.

Question. On January 21, 2014, the Iraqi Cabinet of Ministers announced that it agreed to create three new provinces in Iraq, including in the Nineveh Plains, which is home to Iraq's vulnerable Assyrian Christians minority. Since 2003, terrorists have disproportionately targeted the Christian community in Iraq. The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) estimates that "half or more of the pre-2003 Iraqi Christian community is believed to have left the country."

Does the U.S. Government officially support the creation of the Nineveh Plains Province? Has the USG offered assistance to the Iraqi Government to assist in the creation of the Nineveh Plains province?

Answer. The safety and rights of the Christian communities in Iraq, including security concerns and protection of their lands, are issues of long-standing concern to the State Department. We have provided over \$83 million in assistance to organizations working with minority communities since 2008 for a variety of efforts including community stabilization, conflict mitigation, and cultural preservation.

After the preliminary decision of the Council of Ministers (COM) January 21 to convert the districts of Tuz, Fallujah, and the Ninewa Plains to provinces, it referred this matter to committee for further development. In order for this proposal to come into effect under Iraq's constitutional framework, the COM must review and approve it in the final form of a draft law and then send the draft law to Iraq's Council of Representatives for its review and approval. We are monitoring this proposal closely and view it as an internal Iraqi matter.

Question. Has the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad designated a liaison for the Nineveh Plains that works with the Iraqi Government, Iraqi Christian community groups, and the U.S. Government?

Answer. Ambassador Beecroft, Deputy Chief of Mission Desrocher, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State McGurk (who also serves as the Secretary's Special Coordinator for Iraq's Religious and Ethnic Minorities), and other staff meet regularly with representatives of all religious and ethnic minority groups, including Christians, to discuss their concerns and how the U.S. might be of greatest assistance to them. They then share those concerns with the highest levels of the Government of Iraq. Embassy Baghdad, Consulate General Erbil, and relevant State Department offices have staff dedicated to understanding and addressing the most pressing issues facing religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and the concerns of the Iraqi diaspora in the United States.

Question. On February 17, 2014, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) published its final report, which detailed horrific crimes including "extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape and sexual violence." It notes that "the gravity, scale and nature of these violations reveal a state that does not have any parallel." Mr. Secretary, I traveled to North Korea as a congressional staffer in the late 1990's and these findings are not surprising to those of us who have been following this country closely. What is surprising is the level of detail the Commission was able to document, especially given how closed North Korea has been.

What is the next step you and our Mission at the UN will take to follow up on this report? How will you ensure that this won't simply become another UN report that becomes buried on a shelf and no action is ever taken? Have you and Ambassador Power had conversations with our allies regarding taking action on this report?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned about the deplorable human rights situation in the DPRK and the welfare of the North Korean people. We strongly support the Commission's final report, including its calls for accountability for the perpetrators of the ongoing, widespread, and systematic violations of human rights taking place in North Korea. In March 2013, the United States co-sponsored, along with Japan, the European Union, and the Republic of Korea, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution that established the Commission. On March 28 this year, the United States was proud to co-sponsor the HRC resolution that passed overwhelmingly. In the resolution, the HRC condemned the DPRK's human rights violations, renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK, stressed the need for accountability for those responsible for human rights violations, and requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a field-based mechanism to strengthen monitoring and documentation as well as maintain visibility of the situation of human rights in the DPRK.

We support the Human Rights Council recommendation that the UN General Assembly forward the Commission's final report to the UN Security Council for its consideration. We continue to work closely with a broad range of partners in the international community to sustain attention to the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea and to seek ways to hold the regime accountable for its human rights violations. Our Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights, Robert King, is working with these partners and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to identify the most appropriate venue and structure for the field-based mechanism called for in the HRC resolution. Deputy Secretary William Burns met April 14 with the Honorable Michael Kirby, former chair of the Commission, to discuss the findings of the Commission. And on April 17, Ambassador Samantha Power representing the United States—together with French and Australian officials—convened an Arria-formula meeting for UN Security Council members with the Commissioners to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry's (COI) report on the DPRK human rights situation. This meeting was a further testament to the growing international consensus that the human rights situation in the DPRK is unacceptable.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

Question. The fiscal year 2015 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs budget proposes a \$32 million cut to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which is a 23 percent reduction from fiscal year 2014. According to the Congressional Budget Justification: "NED makes approximately 1,200 grants per year in nearly 100 countries. NED's grants advance long-term U.S. interests and address immediate needs in strengthening democracy, human rights, and rule of law."

With the recent democratic upheavals throughout the globe, including the Arab World, Ukraine and Venezuela, do you find it counterintuitive that you are asking Congress to significantly scale back NED funding in fiscal year 2015?

Answer. The fiscal year 2014 congressional appropriation for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) included both \$100,000,000 for their core funding, as well as an additional \$35,000,000 in directives for specific countries in lieu Economic Support Funds that NED received in prior years. The President's fiscal year 2015 budget request for NED was straight lined from fiscal year 2014 and is consistent with past requests (chart provided).

Funding Year	Request	Appropriated
Fiscal year 2011	\$105,000,000	\$117,764,000
Fiscal year 2012	104,252,000	117,764,000
Fiscal year 2013	104,252,000	111,802,000
Fiscal year 2014	103,450,000	135,000,000
Fiscal year 2015	103,450,000

Question. The Department of State's 2013 Human Rights Report for Afghanistan stated: "Although the situation of women marginally improved during the year, domestic and international gender experts considered the country very dangerous for women, and women routinely expressed concern that social, political, and economic gains would be lost in the post-2014 transition." Organizations such as Human Rights Watch have specifically expressed concerns over signs of a rollback of women's rights in anticipation of the transition in Afghanistan.

In your assessment, has there been a rollback in women's rights in Afghanistan?

What efforts are being made by the United States Government to ensure the preservation and advancement of women's rights in Afghanistan post-2014?

Answer. Afghan women have made enormous strides since 2001. Girls now make up 40 percent of enrolled students throughout the country, women are represented in parliament and on provincial councils, businesswomen and female entrepreneurs are playing a key role in the economic development of their country, life expectancy for women has risen from 44 years in 2001 to 64 years today and female activists are actively advocating for social justice and seeking a peaceful resolution to the Afghan conflict.

While these gains remain fragile, it is important to note the growing change of attitudes towards women in Afghan society as it signifies the potential for continued advancement. Democracy International polling indicates that 92 percent of Afghans believe that women have the right to participate in elections. Across the country, illiteracy and the lack of education is identified as the biggest problem facing women in all regions. A 2013 Asia Foundation survey found that 83 percent of respondents agree that women should have the same educational opportunities as men.

These changes were evident on election day when Afghan women turned out in large numbers to vote, acted as election officials, and even ran as candidates. Widespread reporting indicates Afghan women were able to participate in significant numbers, and the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) initial estimate is that 35 percent of ballots were cast by women.

As we move forward in the transition process, we will continue to promote Afghan women's rights to sustain these gains. The U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement and the 2012 Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework speak to the mutual commitments of the United States and the Afghan Government in protecting and promoting women's rights and role in society.

We have also adopted a "Gender Strategy" in order to continue to mainstream gender issues into all of our policies and programs through transition and beyond. This includes substantial assistance to women to build their capacity to participate fully in Afghan society—in the political, economic, education, health and social realms—and, thereby, help build their country's future.

There can be no progress without women's progress, and nowhere is this more critical than in Afghanistan. As Secretary Kerry said at Georgetown last November, we view women's rights in Afghanistan as a strategic necessity and the surest way to guarantee that Afghanistan will sustain the progress of the last decade.

QUESTION—FLY AMERICA ACT

Question. The Fly America Act requires all Federal agencies, Government contractors, and subcontractors use U.S.-flag air carriers for U.S. Government funded air transportation of personnel or property. Although the Fly America Act is current statute and should be applied to all U.S. Government contracts regardless of wheth-

er the clauses are explicitly referenced, there have been several instances in which State Department solicitations do not reference the Fly America Act. There have also been instances of foreign air carriers being used without an authorized exception under the Act. While the State Department has published clear guidance on Fly America Act compliance for personnel, there does not seem to be guidance concerning contracts, subcontracts, and Part 135 Air Carriers, which are certified by the FAA for passenger service of up to 30 persons or cargo service of up to 7500 lbs., and traditionally provide nonscheduled air transportation services. (Part 121 Air Carriers are also certified by the FAA for passenger and cargo service exceeding 30 persons or 7500 lbs., and usually provide scheduled air transportation services.)

Does the State Department provide guidance on Fly America Act compliance? Does this guidance distinguish between Part 135 and Part 121 Air Carriers? Can you provide a copy of that guidance?

Answer. Regarding passenger travel, the Department's Fly America Act policy is defined in 14 FAM 583, Use of U.S.-Flag and Foreign Flag Carriers. The Fly America Act, 49 U.S.C. 40118, establishes as a legal requirement that all U.S. Government-financed air travel be performed on U.S.-flag air carriers, where available as defined by 14 FAM 583, unless certain narrow exceptions apply. The relevant Comptroller General Guidelines for implementing this Act are found in B-138942, March 31, 1981 (see 14 FAM 583.7 for travel between two points abroad). The use of American Flag carriers is enforced using contracted travel management centers, with close oversight by government travel managers.

The Department's policies for purchasing air and ocean shipping services as they relate to the various American Flag laws are reflected in 14 FAM 311 and 14 FAM 314. The Department maintains a close working relationship with the Maritime Administration and the American Flag Industry to ensure maximum use of U.S. Flag vessels.

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires the use of clause FAR 52.247-63 in solicitations/contracts that have possible travel requirements. The clause requires that all contractors and subcontractors comply with the Fly America Act. Enforcement is accomplished during invoice payment and subsequent Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) audits. Unauthorized expenditures for air transport using foreign carriers are not allowed. If this happens on one of the Department contracts, the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or the Contracting Officer (CO) will take necessary action to advise the prime contractor of the clause violation.

All Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) contracts contain the following clauses and a letter is attached to all Federal Business Opportunities, FedBizOpps.gov, acquisitions announcements.

—I.79, 52.247-63 PREFERENCE FOR U.S.-FLAG AIR CARRIERS, June 2003

—I.80, 52.247-64 PREFERENCE FOR PRIVATELY OWNED U.S.-FLAG COMMERCIAL VESSELS, February 2006

In addition to these Department policies and authorities, there are several internal procedures that institutionalize travel rules and regulations:

- Department personnel are required to use a designated Travel Management Center (TMC) to schedule their travel after receiving approved travel orders;
- A global logistics system is used by transportation managers to monitor shipments as they move through our logistics system; and
- A travel vouchering process provides a system to review and approve travel to ensure that Department rules and regulations have been followed.

Question. What measures does the State Department take to ensure contractors remain in compliance with the Fly America Act requirements for all aviation transportation services paid with State Department funds?

Answer. The COR monitors the day to day administration of the contract, to include contractor compliance with the Fly America Act. The COR or the Contracting Officer will advise the prime contractor of the clause violation. Additional enforcement is accomplished during invoice payment and subsequent DCAA audits should a violation be observed.

Question. Are all subcontracts also required to comply with the Fly America Act? How are they monitored initially and is there any ongoing review to ensure compliance?

Answer. The COR is responsible for ensuring all subcontractors comply with the Fly America Act and the Fly America Clause, FAR 52.247.63. If a subcontractor is found to be in violation of the FAR, the COR would address the matter with the prime contractor, as outlined above. There is no requirement to consent to every subcontract and there is no requirement to perform a constant on-going review.

Question. Have foreign-owned entities ever participated as subcontractors or joint venture partners in airlift activities in violation of the Fly America Act? If so, please

site the incident(s) and what steps were then taken by the DOS to ensure future compliance.

Answer. The Department of State does not track such violations. Any violation found by a COR or CO would have been settled at that time. No data bases or reports exist that can be searched.

Question. How does the State Department ensure that requirements written for subcontracts for Part 135 international aviation services are not written to purposefully exclude otherwise qualified U.S. carriers?

Answer. Contracting Officers read the requirements documents very carefully and ensure that they do not violate other FAR requirements or clauses. If they note a requirement that would violate the Fly America Act and FAR Clause 52.247-63, they would have the program office remove that requirement.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JOHN BOOZMAN

Question. In your testimony, you touched on several vital ways in which the foreign affairs budget is used: supporting ongoing struggles for self-determination and democracy, fighting narco-trafficking across the globe, and supporting global health initiatives like PEPFAR. One area that you did not touch on, however, was an area in which would see an increase of nearly 27 percent under the requested budget: efforts to counter global climate change. With the ongoing conflicts in Central Africa and Eastern Europe, Iran's and Syria's continued defiance of international norms, and many other pressing issues concerning global and national security, why have you prioritized climate?

Answer. Climate change is one of the most significant global threats we face and addressing it is an urgent imperative. There is a pressing need to act now to assist developing countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while achieving economic growth, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and developing the technical expertise required to make and keep emission reduction commitments. Climate assistance is also an opportunity for the United States to lead efforts to reduce pollution, improve public health, grow our economy, and reduce poverty abroad. This budget requests targeted investments to help protect against rising seas encroaching on coastlines and coastal communities, prolonged and extreme droughts leading to food insecurity and threatening agriculture-dependent livelihoods, and other hallmarks of a dramatically changing climate.

The requested funding investment will assist partners around the world in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change and will support U.S. diplomatic efforts to negotiate a new international climate agreement in 2015. In addition, this funding helps protect the significant efforts we are making at home under the President's Climate Change Action Plan by promoting a global response so that our actions are not undermined by inconsistent actions abroad. U.S. leadership is necessary to bring nations together and forge partnerships to safeguard future generations from the dangerous and costly repercussions of global climate change.

This budget request includes nearly \$200 million to support clean energy programs that promote the adoption of renewable and energy efficient technologies and leverage private sector investment in clean energy. It also includes almost \$200 million to help the most vulnerable countries adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change and over \$120 million to reduce emissions from land use.

These investments also present economic opportunities for both the United States and developing country partners, including increased demand for U.S. technologies.

Question. Yesterday the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved legislation to provide aid to Ukraine while implementing sanctions against those responsible for the undermining of the country's sovereignty. With the pending illegal referendum in Crimea, can you comment on the specific steps that the administration is considering to prevent this attempted annexation by Russia?

Answer. On March 16, 2014, the Ukrainian region of Crimea held an illegal referendum concerning accession to the Russian Federation. This referendum was in violation of the Ukrainian constitution, which states any questions "of altering the territory of Ukraine are resolved exclusively by an All-Ukrainian referendum." By March 21, the Russian Federation Council had approved the treaty on Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Federation.

Since the beginning of Russia's occupation of Crimea, the administration has engaged the international community, through organizations such as the United Nations, the OSCE, and the G-7 to demonstrate the resolute international consensus that such actions do not belong in the 21st century. The United States and our many partners have not, and will not, recognize the illegitimate annexation of Crimea.

Concerning both Ukrainian and Russian individuals complicit in undermining Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, the administration has utilized, and will maintain, targeted sanctions against those in position to effect change in Russia's policy and actions. Close cooperation with European and other partners has been, and will remain, a fundamental component of ensuring that sanctioned individuals experience full financial costs. The consequent uncertain business climate has already had and will continue to have costs for Russian interests.

As events move forward, the administration will sustain its efforts with our European partners in multilateral fora to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, and encourage Russia to return its troop deployments to pre-crisis levels and positions. Secretary Kerry pursued these efforts at the Geneva quadrilateral meeting with representatives of the European Union, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation on April 17. At the meeting, the participants agreed that all sides must refrain from any violence, intimidation or provocative actions; all expressions of extremism, racism and religious intolerance, including anti-Semitism, are to be condemned and wholly rejected; all illegal armed groups must be disarmed; all illegally seized buildings must be returned to legitimate owners; all illegally occupied streets, squares and other public places in Ukrainian cities and towns must be vacated. Amnesty will be granted to protestors and to those who have left buildings and other public places and surrendered weapons, with the exception of those found guilty of capital crimes. It was also agreed that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission should play a leading role in assisting Ukrainian authorities and local communities in the immediate implementation of these de-escalation measures wherever they are needed most.

Question. You stated in your testimony, "Our \$1 billion loan guarantee is needed urgently but it's only through the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—a reformed IMF—that Ukraine will receive the additional help it needs to stand on its own two feet." During Secretary Lew's testimony before the Senate Budget Committee yesterday, he confirmed the existence of programs within the IMF for extraordinary assistance, such as what is being proposed for Ukraine. In light of this, can you please comment on whether congressional approval of IMF reform is actually required to assist Ukraine?

Answer. Ratification of the IMF reforms would support the IMF's capacity to lend additional resources to Ukraine and other countries in crisis, preserve the U.S. veto over important institutional decisions, and do so without increasing the current U.S. financial commitment to the IMF. The reforms would put the IMF's finances on a more stable long-term footing, which would provide the institution with more financial flexibility in lending additional resources to Ukraine, and increase Ukraine's IMF quota. We are the last major economy to act and our approval is the only remaining step for these important reforms to go into effect.

Question. I would like to shift to Afghanistan. Just last week, General Austin testified that "in the wake of such a precipitous departure, [the Afghan Government's] long-term viability is likely to be at high risk and the odds of an upsurge in terrorists' capability increases without continued substantial international economic and security assistance." Do you agree with this assessment? Additionally, what are the State Department's lessons learned from our withdrawal from Iraq, given the current instability and security situation there?

Answer. Despite many advances in Afghanistan, we anticipate continued support will be necessary post-2014, consistent with the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2012. This is why we seek to conclude a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) and why NATO is negotiating its own status of forces agreement.

Afghanistan is different from Iraq in key respects. We have signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan that commits us to continued security and economic cooperation over the long term. In 2011 the Iraqis did not want a continued U.S. presence. They did not think they needed us, and no significant Iraqi official was prepared to argue publicly for a continued U.S. military presence. By contrast, consistent polling results and the outcome of the Loya Jirga in November 2013 show that there is broad support among political elites and ordinary Afghans for a continued international presence post-2014. Moreover, all of Afghanistan's leading Presidential candidates have said that signing the BSA would be a top priority once elected.

Question. You have indicated that a bad deal with Iran is worse than no deal. Therefore, what do you believe would constitute a bad deal?

Answer. The administration is working with the P5+1 and EU to reach a comprehensive solution to the international community's concerns with Iran's nuclear program. Our goal remains to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and ensure that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. All of the things on which we will have to reach agreement in the course of the negotiations are addressed in the Joint Plan of Action. We are looking to ensure that we have the right combina-

tion of measures in place to ensure Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon. This is why we agreed in the Joint Plan of Action that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed in a comprehensive solution. All members of the P5+1 must agree on any final decision, so we will be able to ensure that an agreement meets our needs. Anything that falls short of meeting our needs would be a bad deal.

Question. As you know, in December of 2012, the United States closed its Embassy and recalled its diplomats in the Central African Republic (CAR) due to the escalating conflict. Despite the seemingly successful election of an interim president, sectarian violence and regional instability continue to rise. Can you comment on whether we plan on returning our diplomatic presence?

Answer. The United States is concerned with inter-religious violence in the CAR and remains committed to working with the international community to support the CAR transitional government in its efforts to end the violence and build a transitional political process. The Department of State is reviewing the re-opening of Embassy Bangui in light of our strong interest in better supporting the restoration of democratic governance in CAR. The purpose of the review is to obtain a decision on whether a U.S. presence in Bangui is viable in light of the level of insecurity. There is no firm date for a decision on whether to re-open Embassy Bangui at this time. While not optimal, officials continue temporary duty visits and employ other mechanisms to monitor events in, and implement policies toward, CAR.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator LEAHY. On a personal note, I wish you luck on your trip tonight.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Senator.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you for trying. Like in any diplomacy, you have to go down a lot of dead ends before you hit the right one. Thank you for keeping trying.

Secretary KERRY. Thank for very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a privilege to be with you. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., Thursday, March 13, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]